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MULTICULTURAL SOCIAL INTERVENTION
AND NATION-BUILDING IN SOUTH AFRICA

THE ROLE OF
ISLAMIC COUNSELLING AND PSYCHOTHERAPY

A DISSERTATION PRESENTED FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY
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Opinions expressed and conclusions arrived at are those of the authors.

DEDICATION

In fond memory of my dear beloved father

YAGYA ABDULLAH
(D.1999)

ABSTRACT

This thesis explores the role of multicultural counselling in nation-building in South Africa, using Islamic counselling and psychotherapy as a research case study. It merges a number of seemingly disparate disciplines in an innovative analysis of post-Apartheid social reconstruction. Culture, counselling, politics and religion converge and embrace areas of enquiry like Islam, diversity and identity studies, religio-cultural healing, gender studies, democracy, and human and social transformation.

This study examines these dimensions of multicultural and Islamic counselling in nation-building. It illustrates that it is possible to formulate a coherent methodology of Islamic counselling that is consistent with and can facilitate nation-building in South Africa. The formulation of this methodology and its design is the basis of this research. The thesis asserts that to effect desired social change, it is the responsibility of the state to provide Islamic counselling services

The state as an Islamic counselling service provider requires the inclusion of Islamic counselling in social welfare development services. This encourages relevant multicultural counselling service provision that is accessible to clients and consonant with democratic transformation in the country. The thesis concludes that state-supported Islamic counselling service provision which is cognisant of the needs of clients is a constitutional imperative and essential to nation-building in South Africa.

INTRODUCTION

Multicultural counselling is an area of study that has emerged as a critical discourse in academic disciplines. It is primarily located in the social sciences and acknowledges the efficacy of diverse methodologies in counselling service provision. Axelson (1993:12) defines this discipline:

Multicultural counselling encompasses all the components of the many different cultural environments in a democratic society, together with the pertinent theories, techniques, and practices of counselling. In this regard, the approach takes into specific consideration the traditional and contemporary backgrounds and environmental experiences of diverse clients and how special needs might be identified and met through the resources of the helping profession.

Multicultural counselling is a significant shift away from the exclusive use of mainstream counselling models that has dominated academic spheres and the design of counselling intervention. Psychoanalysis, Behaviourism and Humanism are counselling paradigms that are associated with Euro-American society and were traditionally considered appropriate forms of counselling intervention for all societies.

The hallmark of these methods is an emphasis on individuality and an exclusion of religion and culture in its approach. This focus has made it progressively ineffective in dealing with different clients, as diverse value, belief and social systems prove important components in counselling. Bodibe (1996), Dommissie (1986; 1987), Kagee and Price (1994), Swartz (1998), and Vogelmann (1990), for example, challenge the viability of mainstream socio-psychological intervention in South Africa's Apartheid context.

Cinnirella and Loewenthal (1999), Saleh (1989), Lago (1996), Brody (1987), Sue (1978) and Pederson (1988) likewise contrast mainstream counselling in relation to race, religion, culture, gender and ethnicity in counselling.

Multicultural counselling recognises the limitations of mainstream methods in approach and application in different societal contexts, and presents alternatives that are consistent with the needs of clients. It is wide-ranging and embraces various methods that are constantly increasing as diverse communities enjoy greater freedom and confidence in modern-day society to express their unique value systems and ways of being. Jurich (1998:3-4) notes:

...the term psychotherapy has come to encompass a wide range of practices that existed long before the word "psychotherapy" was coined. In the words of Kubie, "It can include the mystical healing rites of a priest-physician of ancient Greece, or the drum beating and voodoo practices of a modern primitive, David strumming his lyre against Saul's melancholy, or classes in rhythmic dancing in modern psychiatric clinics".

Tseng (1999) similarly identifies psychotherapy methods like divination, meditation and spirit mediumship, and culture-specific therapies like Ho'oponopono in Hawaii and Naikan and Morita therapy devised in Japan. Kissman (1990) highlights the supportive value of fortune-telling among Icelandic women; McLeod (1996) articulates a narrative approach to psychotherapy, Boadella (1998) speaks of body-psychotherapy, and Moodley (1998) suggests 'Frank Talk' as a counselling method. The latter rests on 'black consciousness' as espoused by Steve Biko, a political activist of South Africa's liberation struggle who died in detention.

Religion is likewise emphasised in multicultural counselling as in Elkins's (1995) proposal of a 'theory of the soul' and Bergin's (1980; 1991) discussion of the role of religion in psychotherapy. Pitchon (1998), Brown (1998), Sermabekian (1994) and West (1997) similarly emphasise healing and spirituality in psychotherapy and social intervention.

Underpinning multicultural counselling is a recognition of diversity and appropriate service provision that is consonant with the needs of clients and different social and communal contexts. As such, it is an approach to counselling that is inclusive and consistent with democratic values and pluralist societies. Its limitation is that like mainstream methods, it focuses on individual development, for while it encourages diversity and social and cultural awareness in counselling, it does not advance multicultural counselling as part of social processes of intervention.

Islamic counselling and psychotherapy is a religio-cultural counselling model located in multicultural counselling. For conciseness, the term 'Islamic counselling' in this text refer equally to Islamic counselling and psychotherapy. Islamic counselling is a new area of academic inquiry and its inclusion in multicultural counselling is an added perspective to the discourse. A further innovation is the exploration of Islamic counselling in relation to nation-building in South Africa.

In sum this study expands on multicultural counselling by adding to its academic base and addresses its aforementioned limitation by advancing multicultural counselling in the

form of Islamic counselling as a social process. It also builds on Islamic counselling, which is an individual based counselling paradigm. Before outlining the relationship of Islamic counselling to nation-building, initial clarity on Islamic counselling as a counselling paradigm is apposite.

Islamic Counselling is an area of study that is in its formative years and still requires theoretical development to constitute a comprehensive academic discipline. Despite the lack of academic coherence Islamic Counselling is recognised and practised at a popular level across the Muslim world and has been utilised for a very long time. This expression of Islamic Counselling includes a diversity of practitioners and embraces a variety of methodologies that are implemented in informal and unstructured ways.

In South Africa, religious leaders, counsellors, welfare and social workers as well as traditional healers and laypersons are included in this array of practitioners. These practitioners either believe in the efficacy of Islam in counselling or arbitrarily or exclusively include Islamic principles in their intervention. At its basis, intervention entails integrating tenets of Islam with giving advice, which is an approach generally accepted to constitute Islamic Counselling practice.

At an academic level analyses of Islamic counselling has concentrated on asserting a need for Islamic services for Muslims as opposed to using mainstream methods. Mainstream counselling is criticised for its exclusion of religion, culture and spirituality and as formulated in specific contexts that limit its relevance to certain societies.

particularly Euro-American society. Scholars consider these paradigms as inappropriate for Muslim clients and as an alternative suggest an exclusive Islamic counselling model for Muslim societies based on the Qur'ān and Sunnah.

Malik Badri (1979; 1996), Mumtaz Jafari (1993) and Yasien Mohammed (1995; 1996) are scholars of Islamic social sciences who address the topic from this perspective. Their work emphasises an incompatibility of Islam to mainstream social sciences and identify Qur'ānic texts and Islamic concepts and ritual practices to incorporate in Islamic Counselling. The contention of a unique Islamic model that integrates Islamic techniques concludes these debates.

The view of a specific Islamic counselling model for Muslim clients is appropriate in the context of relevant multicultural counselling service provision in diverse societies. The form in which the above scholars propose this however, raises important concerns for Islamic counselling. Mainstream counselling models are criticised as narrow in their focus and reach, but the design of Islamic counselling as an exclusive model replicates this approach. An exclusive Islamic counselling model also impedes the scope of Islamic counselling as a mechanism for social change as well as the exploration of diverse counselling paradigms in mutually enriching ways.

In recent times, further efforts have been directed at the academic development of Islamic counselling. Scholars explore a range of disciplines and historical developments including Islamic and Prophetic Medicine, Sufism, and religio-cultural practices to

extract guidelines for Islamic counselling. This research, which include one attempt at a structured theory and definition of Islamic counselling,¹ has produced diverse information on Islamic social intervention spread across different fields of study. This thesis formulates this information into a coherent knowledge base of Islamic counselling that consists of four models of intervention. The models are a medical model, a Qur'ānic model that includes a Sufi model of Islamic counselling, a religio-cultural model, and a *sharī'ah* (Islamic Law) model. The models form the theoretical framework of the analysis of Islamic counselling in nation-building in South Africa.

The definition of these models as 'Islamic counselling' is subject to a debate that exists on the extent to which certain areas of study qualify to be termed 'Islamic'. In Islamic counselling the debate rests on assessing whether counselling intervention in Muslim societies is equivalent to counselling based on Islam. This is evident in the medical and religio-cultural models, which are models not premised so much on Islamic principles as they are counselling methods applied in Muslim contexts.

Al-Issa (2000:322-26) notes this dilemma of definition in assessing differences between Islamic Psychiatry and psychiatric practices in the Islamic world. He indicates that the area of study has to date not yet been sufficiently explored to give clear direction on the matter. Hoffer (1992:40-41) limits definition of Islamic intervention by describing Islamic therapies as cures based on the Qur'ān and Ḥadīth. He adds that such limitations

¹ See Abdullah, S. (1998).

are however often overlooked in practice as healing merges with popular belief systems of ritual and the supernatural.

This thesis classifies all the above models as Islamic counselling. The entwined nature of Islam and Muslim life that interact and diverge in the helping process makes a clear-cut definition of Islamic counselling impractical. In addition, although varied in intensity and focus, the models all integrate aspects of Islam, Muslim culture, and communal life that make it identifiable as Islamic counselling. The interrelated nature of these methods that identifies it as Islamic counselling and limit its definition in this regard is included in the outline of the models.²

The extension of Islamic counselling to nation-building in South Africa brings a pivotal dimension to this thesis viz. South Africa's transition from an Apartheid regime to a democratic order. The history of Apartheid, its violence and violations of human rights and its notorious reputation as a crime against humanity is widely acknowledged and well-documented.

For a long time South Africa's Apartheid state captured the attention of the world as the only system of government explicitly based on racial discrimination and institutionalised as law. This, together with its profound negative impact on those exposed thereto made it

² For a similar illustration of the complexities of definition in this instance of Islamic psychology, see Khaleefa, O.H. (1997). The author proposes the use of the term '*Ummah*' instead of 'Islamic' as a point of reference to formulate what he calls '*Ummatic Psychology*' that is unique to Islamic contexts.

the focus of scorn and resistance expressed through large-scale domestic and international protest and revolutionary action to liberate the country.

The 1994 landmark elections in South Africa, hailed as a victory over injustice and oppression, saw the formal demise of Apartheid and ushered in a new era in the history of the country. Moving from an entrenched system of Apartheid, a new government of National Unity led by the majority African National Congress (ANC) and the people of South Africa were at the threshold of developing a new humane system of governance. Prior to this, the Apartheid state and the liberation movement had been engaged in a process of negotiations and negotiated settlements to set the foundation for democratic change. In the post-election period, the task now was to ensure the practical implementation of this change.

In a range of measures, both state and civil society engaged initiatives, commissions and development programmes to advance the transformation to a democratic and accountable socio-political order. This included finalising the new Constitution and providing for a Constitutional Court and six (6) state institutions to support constitutional democracy. The latter institutions include The Human Rights Commission, the Commission for the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Cultural, Religious and Linguistic Communities, and the Commission for Gender Equality.³

³ The other three institutions are the Public Protector; the Auditor General and the Electoral Commission.

Despite these efforts South Africa remained negatively influenced by its past. In the post-Apartheid period people who were previously isolated from each other were now required to live together and interact at different levels of society. Many expressed a new-found sense of affirming desired racial, religious, ethnic and cultural, individual, and group identities as supported by the new socio-political order. These factors became areas of contention that saw racial, cultural and religious polarisation anew, that indeed intensified given the effects of Apartheid as manifest in violence, poverty and socio-economic deprivation.

To avert escalating conflict the new South African government embraced a process of nation-building. Human, social and economic reconstruction were critical elements defined to facilitate the process and relayed in discourses on the National Question in South Africa. Another important feature of nation-building in South Africa that is central to this thesis was the establishment of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC).

The TRC was implemented as a bridge-building exercise for South Africa to move from a divided past to a society based on human rights and democracy. It sought to facilitate nation-wide healing and reconciliation through, as the then Archbishop of Cape Town Desmond Tutu described, “contrition, confession and forgiveness” based on the truth about human rights violations of Apartheid South Africa.⁴ To this end, the Commission had to assess gross human rights violations committed by all sectors of the state and liberation movement over a period of thirty-three years of Apartheid rule.

⁴ See Foreword, Borraine. A., Levy, J., and Scheffer, R. (Eds.). (1997).

In addition, the TRC had to address the controversial issue of granting or denying amnesty to perpetrators. Three committees, the Committee on Human Rights Violations, the Committee on Amnesty and the Committee on Reparation and Rehabilitation were set up to support the process. Guiding legislation for the overall process was the Promotion of National Unity and Reconciliation Act of 1995. To conclude, the Commission had to compile a comprehensive report on its activities, findings and recommendations.

Having recently completed its work, the TRC documented its findings. Its report highlights the physical and psychological consequences of Apartheid human rights abuses on the people of South Africa. It notes that South Africa's history of repression and exploitation has severely affected the mental wellbeing of the majority of its citizens. The population experienced sustained psychological stress due to deprivation, dire socio-economic conditions and the cumulative trauma of violent state repression and intra-community conflict.

The report notes that a number of factors compound the situation. These include a historical neglect in the area of mental health and a lack of trained social science practitioners to address these specific problems. Current social circumstances are also not conducive to dealing with psychological traumas and implementing successful therapeutic interventions. Resources are limited and clients live in dysfunctional environments that counter the benefits of intervention. Most importantly, attempts to provide culturally appropriate mental health care to all South Africans have been lacking.

The TRC identified the need for appropriate counselling service provision in South Africa's democratic transformation. It added a moral dimension to nation-building based on human and social healing and reconciliation. In totality then, based on the National Question and the TRC, post-apartheid nation-building in South Africa was conceptualised as a process of human, socio-economic, and moral reconstruction.

South Africa's approach to nation-building transcends the conventional design of nation-building as development of the nation-state. In the nation-state model, the state is the political unit that administers the affairs of the nation through government institutions. The nation is a social group that shares a common ideology, common institutions and customs and a sense of homogeneity. The state represents the values of the nation and secures loyalty through nationalism.

An ethnic group is a minority group or sub-system within the nation. An ethnic group can though also be the dominant composition of the nation, as Eriksen (1996:30) clarifies:

The distinguishing mark of nationalism is by definition its relationship with the state. A nationalist holds that political boundaries should be coterminous with cultural boundaries, whereas many ethnic groups do not demand command over a state. When the political leaders of an ethnic movement make demands to this effect, the ethnic movement therefore by definition becomes a nationalist movement'.

The complexities of the nation-state model and nationalism as nation-building are its inherent dangers in multicultural societies. If a link between political power and a

particular social group that symbolises the nation is encouraged, other groups stand to be isolated from the 'nation' and are vulnerable to victimisation.

These factors made the nation-state model inadequate for South Africa's multicultural society and were decisive in the nation-building design adopted for the country. In addition, Afrikaner nationalism expressed in Apartheid illustrated the failure of the nation-state model and was a determining factor in its negation for post-apartheid South Africa.

The South African context of nation-building as human, socio-economic, and moral reconstruction forms the backdrop of this thesis. It examines the role of Islamic counselling as a means to enhance nation-building and aims to provide a broad strategy to contribute to the process. To this end, it argues the fundamental principle that state-supported, client-based Islamic counselling is intrinsic to nation-building in South Africa. State-supported services refer to social and welfare services allocated by a state to its citizens. Client-based services refer to service provision that is consistent with the needs of clients and enhances the potential of client participation to move beyond the role of recipients of services to agents in its design.

The thesis asserts that a lack of such service provision contradicts the state's commitment to socio-economic redress and democratic transformation. It reinforces social intervention that is limited in perspective and inappropriate to the needs of diverse clients. It

encourages circumstances that hamper equal resource allocation and maintains decision-making that excludes client participation in issues that affect their lives.

In the context of post-apartheid social reconstruction, these conditions become catalysts for social dissent and ongoing racial polarisation. In addition, it works against social justice in South Africa as recognised in the Constitution and TRC. State intervention to enhance social reconstruction is therefore critical. In its absence, the state not only reneges on its commitment to democracy and social justice in South Africa, it undermines its actual foundation as celebrated in the Constitution.

In a case study analysis of this argument, this thesis is applied to the Muslim community in South Africa. It explores Islamic counselling in the community against the background of Apartheid, current Islamic counselling service provision and the role of Islamic counselling in post-apartheid social reconstruction. In the Muslim community Islamic counselling is the domain of the religious clergy or '*ulamā*'. The '*ulamā*' are theologians who implement tenets of Islam in counselling, with most not qualified as counsellors. The counselling method that guides their intervention is the *sharī'ah* approach, where clients receive advice on principles of Islamic law.

The counselling service of the '*ulamā*' identify a number of issues that make the study of state-supported, client-based Islamic counselling critical to social reconstruction in South Africa. Of note are religious conservatism and erstwhile intra-communal political rivalry during Apartheid that led to the oversight of social problems in the Muslim community.

The result is service provision that is not client-based and is incongruent with the needs of the community. A gender imbalance in counselling, where mainly male scholars counsel a majority female client population using a male-centred interpretation of religious texts that disadvantages women, adds to the import of the study.

A fieldwork project as part of this thesis supports this analysis. First, a participant observation exercise was undertaken at the Muslim Judicial Council (MJC) in Cape Town. Counselling sessions conducted by '*ulamā*' were observed on a weekly basis for a period of six months. This research offered insights into client and counsellor experiences of Islamic counselling as well as concerns and problems in the Muslim community. Other factors assessed were the counselling setting, the client population and techniques employed in intervention.

In follow-up fieldwork, organisations were invited to participate in a focus group discussion on Islamic counselling. The aim of this meeting was to hear the views of practitioners on the nature of Islamic counselling in nation-building in South Africa. Representatives from the Muslim Assembly, The South African National Zakāh Fund (SANZAF), The Islamic Unity Convention (IUC), Ma'rūf Islamic Centre, and an independent social worker participated in the session.

Additional interviews were conducted with counsellors in Islamic and mainstream environments. These include individuals from the Islamic Social and Welfare Association (ISWA), the Trauma Centre for Victims of Violence and Torture, the Muslim Judicial

Council, and Positive Muslims, an AIDS project in the Muslim community. Interviews with a director of the Social Welfare Department of the Provincial Government and a parliamentary committee member were held to assess state opinion on Islamic counselling. Interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim with supporting documentation obtained from some organisations. To maintain confidentiality participants are not identified by name in the text.

The above research represents viewpoints of practitioners on Islamic counselling and nation-building. To assess client attitudes on the topic a questionnaire was distributed for comment. Respondents had to assess standards of Islamic counselling in the Muslim community and its prospects as a state service. Most respondents, however, did not have personal experience of Islamic counselling.

To obtain an account of actual client experiences, a survey was implemented at the Muslim Judicial Council with people who were in the process of utilising the organisation's counselling service. The survey is a modified version of the questionnaire and was re-designed in conjunction with the University of Cape Town Statistics department to ensure statistical validity.

This fieldwork component assesses Islamic counselling in South Africa based on the experiences of clients. The inclusion of client comment in the study is a unique contribution to social intervention in the Muslim community in South Africa. It extends participation beyond traditional leadership levels to the larger Muslim community. As

such, it promotes grassroots participation in a community denied such participation by Apartheid and traditional religious and communal hierarchical leadership. The study is thus a new impetus for Muslim community participation in transformation in South Africa, and encourages a consultative framework for Islamic counselling where those exposed to counselling are central in its design.

Chapter Outline

Chapter 1 examines the transition in South Africa from an Apartheid regime to a democratic dispensation. It focuses on the period after the first democratic elections of 1994 and the factors that made nation-building and social reconstruction critical to democratic development. The National Question and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission are perused, as are tensions in its implementation in relation to nation-building. The centrality of multicultural counselling to these efforts, especially the TRC which embraced many facets of counselling, is covered. This chapter introduces themes of nation-building like religion, gender, and social justice as a basis for its focused analysis in respect of Islamic counselling in ensuing chapters.

Chapter 2 concentrates on the Muslim community in South Africa. It presents a brief history of Muslims in South Africa from their first arrival as a slave community in the Cape in the 17th century, and includes an overview of their diverse population composition. The impact of Colonialism and Apartheid on Muslim communal well being

and the way this informed Muslim participation in the liberation struggle are important elements of the discussion.

A related analysis is the response of the '*ulamā*' to this milieu and their influence on the community. The conservatism of the '*ulamā*' and rivalry between themselves and Muslim political organisations are analysed to show how these factors led to the oversight of communal concerns and an inability to implement effective Islamic social intervention. The result is a Muslim community in need of reconstruction and appropriate Islamic counselling service provision.

Chapter 3 explores Islamic counselling as an academic discipline based on the four models of Islamic counselling. It articulates Islamic counselling as theory and practice, which generates important information for Islamic counselling practice and helps to appraise the application of Islamic counselling to nation-building in South Africa.

The medical model examines discourses on the Islamic medical tradition of the 8th to 10th century (CE) for insights on the origins of Islamic counselling. Here the works of Michael Dols (1992) and Ihsan Al Issa (2000) are useful. The model includes information on contemporary medical studies of mental well being and treatment in the Muslim world, in particular the incidence of Somatisation where psychological and emotional distress manifests in physical ailments.

The Qur'ānic model is based on revelation and is the definitive Islamic counselling approach. The model consists of two components: one based on the Qur'ānic concept of human nature and development; and one based on Sufism. Scholars in Islamic Social Sciences frequently cite Sufism as a source for Islamic counselling as opposed to using mainstream methods for guidelines. The section on Sufism examines this contemporary debate of Islamic counselling in relation to mainstream counselling.

The third model is the religio-cultural Islamic counselling model. This model rests on traditional religio-cultural practices that explain afflictions and healing as spirit possession. Although viewed with considerable doubt, the model is pervasive in Muslim societies and is often a preferred method of counselling sought than professional services. Its outline in this study includes parallels with communities across the Muslim world as well as other cultural communities to give an enhanced insight into its approach. The works of Alean al-Krenawi *et al* which present extensive analyses of this model in a modern-day Arab context, is an important component of the discussion.

The *sharī'ah* model is the fourth model of Islamic counselling. Islamic Law (*sharī'ah*), in particular tenets of Muslim Personal law that regulate family relations, informs the counselling methodology of this model. The *sharī'ah* model is the principal approach of religious scholars and although widely practised, there is limited information available on its form and content as a counselling model. It is the main form of Islamic counselling of the '*ulamā*' including the Muslim Judicial Council (MJC) in the Muslim community in South Africa.

Chapter 4 explores Islamic counselling in South Africa. The questionnaire and survey is the focus of the analysis. Central to the analysis is client and public opinion of Islamic counselling in South Africa and its definition in the context of nation-building. The primary analysis is the survey conducted at the Muslim Judicial Council and includes an overview of the *sharī‘ah* model as implemented at the organisation. The chapter includes an agency analysis of the MJC, a client profile, client attitudes and experiences of current Islamic counselling, and opinions of Islamic counselling as a state supported service.

The thesis concludes with a summary of the main findings of the research. It stresses the importance of state-supported client-based Islamic counselling in post-apartheid nation-building and social reconstruction, and makes recommendations to advance these outcomes. This research explores Islamic counselling in South Africa. It is not confined to this context, however. It draws on studies from many international experiences and is written with an understanding of wider applicability in diverse societies. It supports theoretical and practical convergence in social intervention and the sharing of information of mutual benefit in social service provision. As such, it offers a research framework for similar studies on Islamic counselling in different countries, as well as for other religio-cultural based counselling methods.

CHAPTER 1

Multicultural counselling and the South African context

1.1 Introduction

This thesis explores the role of Islamic counselling as part of nation-building in post-apartheid South Africa. As an introduction to the analysis, this chapter explores the role of counselling in general as part of nation-building. The transition from Apartheid to a democratic dispensation is intrinsic to the broader development of South Africa and compels social research located in the area to be cognisant of these circumstances. This chapter presents an exposition of South Africa's transition. It gives a brief history of the time and focuses on processes that are central to counselling and nation-building. It draws on information from the Apartheid era to elucidate the discussion, but essentially concentrates on the period starting with the first democratic elections of 1994.

The National Question and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission are important aspects of the analysis. They clarify the socio-political framework within which to explore counselling as part of nation-building and allude to the importance of the state in the process. They also highlight tensions in post-Apartheid South Africa that have influenced the transformation process to shape a tenuous democratic order. This democratic order was achieved through many compromises and contradictions with some

negative spin-offs that remain in South African society but are veiled by rhetoric like a 'Miracle transition' and a 'Rainbow nation' in a 'non-racial democracy'.⁵

1.2 The Transition in South Africa

On 27 April 1994 South Africa held its first democratic election. The success of the election was hailed throughout the world for the political will to ensure a peaceful transition in the country. A series of negotiations with the Apartheid state marked the process leading to the momentous event. Talks commenced with the first significant negotiations on 5 July 1989 between Nelson Mandela, still a political prisoner of the Apartheid regime, and PW Botha the then president of South Africa.⁶

Intense negotiations ensued between the African National Congress and the Apartheid state to achieve a political settlement for the country. In 1990, following a state announcement of major political reforms, Nelson Mandela was released from prison. The release of other political prisoners followed and provision was made for exiles to return home. Previously outlawed organisations like the South African Communist Party (SACP), the Pan African Congress (PAC), the African National Congress (ANC), as well as fifty-eight other smaller organisations were unbarred. Other milestones of the time were the Groote Schuur Minute, the Pretoria Minute, the DF Malan Accord and the

⁵ Former Archbishop of Cape Town Desmond Tutu first used the term 'rainbow nation' as a metaphor for South Africa as a diverse nation in a multicultural society. In the post-Apartheid period, it was popularly evoked as a reference point to unify the population. For notes on its original use and symbolism, see Baines, G. (1998).

⁶ See *The Mandela Document*. <<http://www.anc.org.za/ancdocs/history/mandela/doc890705.html>> Accessed: 4 August 2000.

National Peace Accord. The National Peace Accord was an agreement signed by more than forty organisations as a commitment to peace. The Groote Schuur Minute, the Pretoria Minute, and the DF Malan Accord were a series of negotiated agreements between the African National Congress and the state, to set a foundation for South Africa's change to a new order.

The process of negotiations culminated in the Convention for a Democratic South Africa (CODESA) in 1991. A range of representatives of the Apartheid state, the liberation movements and various organisations met formally to negotiate the transition to a democratic order. CODESA disintegrated in disagreement when talks on majority rule and regional power-sharing reached a deadlock. Negotiations resumed in 1992 with CODESA 2. One month later these talks failed as well when the ANC withdrew from the process due to state complicity in political violence. Five months later negotiations resumed with a Record of Understanding signed between the ANC, PAC and the Apartheid government. Emerging from these negotiations a Transitional Executive Council (TEC) represented by all parties to the negotiation process, was set up in 1993 and concluded with the 1994 elections (TRC Report, Vol. 2.Ch.7: 583-584).⁷

During the negotiation period political violence in the country escalated as the Apartheid state resisted change and sought to influence public perceptions to demoralise the liberation movement. Human rights violations and loss of life increased to one of its most intense levels in the history of the liberation struggle. The TRC report (Vol.2.Ch.7: 584)

⁷ See also list of ANC online documents – The Transition.

indicates that from the start of negotiations in 1990 to the elections in 1994 an estimated 14 000 people died in politically motivated violence. This incidence of violence and loss of life were linked to Apartheid state activities that included inciting civil war in the KwaZulu-Natal region, detention and torture, political assassinations, army raids, police complicity in political violence and the use of lethal force in public policing. Right-wing bombing and racist attacks, political intolerance, and military attacks on civilian targets in which sectors of the liberation movement were implicated added to the prevailing violent milieu (TRC Report, Vol. 2.Ch.7: 584-613).

Despite these conditions, compromises were made and change embraced that gave the impression of an overall positive transformation in the country. In the outcome of the election, the ANC triumphed as the majority political party to take South Africa into a new era. Its sustained mobilisation of the South African people to challenge the Apartheid regime culminated in freedom and equality in the country. This freedom was only political and its practical realisation required measures to impel democratic change. The constitution was important in offering a vision for the process in its preamble.⁸

We...adopt this Constitution ...to Heal the divisions of the past and establish a society based on democratic values, social justice and fundamental human rights;
Lay the foundations for a Democratic and open society in which government is based on the will of the people and every citizen is equally protected by law;
Improve the quality of life of all citizens and free the potential of each person.

The reality of South Africa's social circumstances, however, was in distinct contrast to this vision. This tract highlights the nature of these circumstances, as expressed in the

⁸ Act 108 of 1996: Constitution of the Republic of South Africa.

National Question and the TRC, that show the importance of multicultural counselling service provision to post-apartheid social reconstruction.

1.3 The National Question in South Africa

The National Question was the focus of many debates during the transition and a determining factor in the design of nation-building adopted for the country. It captured the effects of Apartheid on the South African population by highlighting ongoing racial conflict and tension in democratic South Africa. As a concept the National Question has since faded into obscurity and is seldom part of any vigorous debate generally or as regards nation-building. The concerns that made it an important issue during the transition remain a significant part of contemporary South Africa nevertheless.

In the immediate post-Apartheid period, the government was confronted with an urgent need to forge a sense of nationhood in a population of diverse ethnic, religious and cultural groups and identities. Different communities had up to that time been isolated from each other and were now required to live together as a nation in a unified South Africa. This situation formed the basis of the Nation Question, which was to determine a process of nation-building that would balance divergent notions of multiculturalism and nationhood. During the transition the issue was accentuated for reasons related to racial and communal group dissent that threatened to destabilise the nascent democratic order.

Three features stood out in this regard, viz. voter patterns of communities who were discriminated against under Apartheid and who identified with the liberation struggle but in the 1994 elections voted for the National Party (NP) of the Apartheid regime; Afrikaner nationalism expressed in Afrikaner right wing demands for a racially based homeland or (*volkstaat*), and violence in the Kwazulu–Natal province that manifested as opposing ethnic and political allegiance to the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) and the ANC.

The Western Cape was the prime example of the electorate voting in favour of the leaders of the previous Apartheid regime, which secured an election victory for the National Party in the province. This was the only province in South Africa in which the party won its election campaign. The Western Cape constitutes a majority of people who were classified ‘*Coloured*’ under Apartheid. Breytenbach (2000:46) aptly describes Apartheid racial constructs that include ‘Black’ and ‘Indian’ as the “loaded terminology of a discredited categorisation”.

In the Western Cape, these identities were reinforced as the National Party sought power in the region. In the Apartheid era, the ‘*Coloured*’ community had been marginally advantaged through race-based resource allocation. During the election period, it was often shown that the NP led a racist election campaign by manipulating fears of Affirmative Action for black people, land invasions, and dispossession of ‘coloured’ people to secure control in the Western Cape. The result was increased racial tension and division amongst ‘coloured’ and ‘black’ people who had voted for the African National

Congress. Carrim (1996:46) indicates that similar voting patterns occurred in the 'Indian' community in South Africa where a majority voted for the National Party.⁹

The state dealt with the Afrikaner right wing demands for a race-based homeland through a series of negotiations with the Afrikaner right to ensure their participation in the election and enhance a peaceful transition. The Interim Constitution¹⁰ acknowledged the right of groups to seek territorial self-determination and made provision for a *Volkstaat* council to make recommendations on the establishment of a *Volkstaat*.

Later negotiations led to new compromises. The final Constitution recognised collective cultural rights in the Bill of Rights and as a concession to the Afrikaner right provided for the Commission for the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Cultural, Religious and Linguistic Communities (The Cultural Commission). Territorial self-determination then shifted to cultural self-determination and became a mechanism for all groups who would want to seek cultural representation.

To date the Cultural Commission has not yet been formally set up but a draft bill on the Commission exists. The Commission will function as a monitoring body to ensure the rights of religious, linguistic and religious groups in society. Its main objectives are to promote cultural, religious and linguistic expression in a manner that enhances nation-

⁹ For diverse analyses on this topic, see James W., Caliguire, D., & Cullinan, K. (Eds.). (1996). For similar analysis on the South African Indian Community, see Carrim, Y. (1994) and Ramsamy, E. (1996).

¹⁰ Act 200 of 1993.

building and to devise ways for the expression of diversity and national unity in mutually reinforcing ways.¹¹

In Kwazulu-Natal violence took the form of territorial battles for community support between the IFP and the ANC. The TRC report notes that the IFP, supported by the Apartheid state, was the foremost perpetrator of gross human rights violations in the region during the transition. Towards the time of the 1994 elections, the IFP decided against participating in the elections over issues of sovereignty for Kwazulu-natal. Six days before the elections and following the regions worst levels of political violence the party opted to participate in the election (Vol.2: Ch.7: 625 / 638). A feature of the violence in the region was the manipulation of ethnic identity by the IFP to gain support, which divided 'Black' communities and increased inter-ethnic dissent and tension in the country (TRC Vol.3.Ch.6: 673). The impact of this violence in destabilising South African society and reinforcing division remained part of social and communal life in South Africa.

Against this background, conflict and dissent continued in South Africa's post-election democratic society and rising discord reinforced racism and violence in the country. The expression of diverse religious, cultural, ethnic and communal identities as supported by the new socio-political order added to perceptions of difference. Fears also existed that

¹¹ Interviews conducted with the ANC chairperson of the Provincial and Local Government Portfolio Committee who is also involved in the design of the Commission: February 1999 and follow-up interview in November 2001. See also current legislation on the Cultural Commission, Bill 62 of 2001.

the new government would promote a nation-state model of nation-building based on politicising ethnicity and advancing nationalist sentiments.

In the South African context, this amounted to a perception that the state now represented by the disadvantaged black majority would conduct the affairs of the nation to the benefit of this group. The dominance of a particular ethnic composition of the state amplified perceptions of ethnic bias in resource allocation. In essence, fears of a reversal of Apartheid existed and found expression in social conflict, and racial and ethnic tension. Academic commentary reflected these concerns.

Christopher,¹² for example, observed that ethnic differences were entrenched during the Apartheid era through indigenous language use and separate ethnic education systems. He argued that ethnicity would be a volatile political issue in post-Apartheid South Africa when the struggle would no longer be in Black and White terms. Chances of political discord in South Africa's post-apartheid multi-ethnic state would therefore be high and addressing issues of ethnicity would require urgent consideration in the transformation.

Degenaar (1993) argued against nation-building for South Africa, which he associated with the nation-state and nationalism. He averred that nation-building was a product of the 19th century and unable to deal with the demands of modern-day politics. Its association with common ancestry, statehood and state allegiance, and merging ethnic

¹² Undated document.

culture with political power made it inappropriate to embark on in the process of transformation in South Africa's multi-ethnic society.

He asserted instead the need for a transcendent democratic culture where the democratisation of society is the measure of nationhood and loyalty to the state. This democratic culture should allow for distribution of power to avoid the misuse of concepts of nation, nation-building or national interest for authoritarian purposes or to legitimise imposing homogeneity onto a diverse society. Ethnicity in turn should be relegated to communal identities in civil society to diminish its potential to be politicised, and instead of working to build a South African nation, efforts should be directed at attaining a just society. The highest political loyalty of citizens should not be to the nation but to a strong, accountable state and civil society rooted in a desire for justice to facilitate a functioning democracy.

According to Simpson (1993), nation-building was necessary in South Africa to ensure international legitimacy and to promote reconciliation in the country. States were legitimised internationally by virtue of being nations or being engaged in nation-building. The process could also support the government's desire to heal divisions created by Apartheid. Nation-building as assimilation of different ethnic groups into one dominant ethnic group was however not a viable option. As a multi-ethnic society, no specific group in South Africa was eligible for the role as the dominant group. Such an approach would in any case bolster ethnic consciousness amongst various groups with negative implications for the state.

Like Degenaar, Simpson emphasises the value of citizenship as a means for nation-building. He opined that the liberation struggle was essentially a struggle of the disenfranchised to gain citizenship in a united South Africa rather than for ethnic distinctiveness. This view he inferred from resistance to Apartheid homeland policies. He argued that the desire for restitution of citizenship and belonging to a greater whole rather than for ethnic-based nation-building was unique in South Africa and could compensate for a lack of shared nationhood. In a non-racial democracy supported by a Bill of Rights, this citizenship would further de-politicise racial and ethnic divisions that may cause social dissent in the country.

This environment does not deny ethnic expression. Simpson noted that ethnic loyalty was neither incompatible with state loyalty nor does it impede identification with citizens of different ethnic origin. However, citizenship, not ethnicity, should be the emphasis of nation-building. Simpson advised thus the establishment of a civic nation, where rights and duties of citizens in a liberal democracy play a unifying role that enhances nationhood, with ethnicity a secondary to the process.¹³

¹³ Landsberg (2000), Simkins (1996) Friedman (1999), Cohen (1993) Magubane (1994), Lemon (1996), Carrim (1994) Ramsamy (1996) and Sachs (1989) offer similar overviews on the transition. Comments are along a continuum of concern and caution to approval of governance, nation-building and the government's role in maintaining the values of democracy.

1.4 Government and the National Question

The above exposition highlights tensions between different sectors in South African society during the transition and concerns about post-apartheid nation-building. The state's response on the National Question is illuminating. Given the prevailing social circumstance, nation-building had to attenuate actual and potential racial conflicts. It had to encourage tolerance and respect for diversity, allay minority group fears and uncertainties about the new government's commitment to change, and enhance a sense of nationhood to support South Africa's new and fragile democracy. According to the ANC government, it was committed to this process.

The government argued that the ANC was established to address the National Question as celebrated in its Freedom Charter.¹⁴ Initially the National Question focussed on liberating the country from colonialism and Apartheid oppression. In post-apartheid South Africa, it had now transformed to the task of reconciling a multiplicity of identities in a united South Africa (Jordan: 1997).

The government's view was clarified in the interviews conducted with the ANC chairperson of the Provincial and Local Government Portfolio Committee. He explained that post-apartheid nation-building seeks to promote a sense of nationhood out of the diverse ethnic, racial, regional, class and gender identities that pervade the country. These

¹⁴ See *The Freedom Charter*: Adopted at the Congress of the People, Kliptown on 26 June 1955. <<http://www.anc.org.za/ancdocs/history/charter.html>> Accessed: 5 August 2000. The Freedom Charter is commonly invoked by the ANC as the fundamental framework of the liberation struggle and post-Apartheid change in South Africa.

aspects, in particular ethnicity, are not irreconcilable or averse to national identity or nation-building. In fact, the appropriate expression of ethnicity can facilitate nation-building. It is only when ethnicity is politicised to secure economic and political goals that nation-building can be derailed.

To avert the threat of politicised ethnicity, the government proposes multiple complementary identities. Thus, a person can be, for example, Zulu, African, Black and South African; or Hindu, Indian, Black and South African. The challenge is for the state to provide an environment to express diverse identities in a manner that fosters a concomitant transcending South African national identity. The ANC government, in turn, is committed to provide the environment to encourage the constructive expression of ethnicity. The chairperson of the Provincial and Local Government Portfolio Committee emphasised that this environment would allow for the positive expression of ethnicity as a means to celebrate diversity. It opposes ethnic expression that creates division or is used to rationalise practices like racial preference or gender discrimination.

According to the ANC, the focus of nation-building that concentrates on diversity and ethnic expression is its socio-psychological level and is important to instil national pride. However, it cannot be the sole focus of nation-building. Nation-building has to be allied to socio-economic redress directed primarily at those disadvantaged by Apartheid. Thabo Mbeki (1995:5) as deputy president articulated the ANC's view.

The task of maintaining and defending the unity and the integrity of the state should be done with appreciation and sensitivity to the rich diversity of our demography, ethnicity, language, culture and environment...this diversity should be balanced and harmonized with the need to promote reconciliation, to build national unity, to maintain stability and peace. National cohesiveness will have to be forged and regional diversity will have to be safeguarded in the real world of vast socio-economic disparities.¹⁵

The state then advanced a social milieu in which South Africans are free to express a particular identity while enjoying a sense of being South African supported by socio-economic transformation. Nation-building, in respect of the National Question, was thus defined as a process of human and socio-economic reconstruction that embraced the complementary expression of a transcendent non-racial identity and particularistic ethnic identities in a democratic South Africa.

The emphasis on socio-economic redress is a distinctive feature of the government's approach to nation-building. While the government's view is consonant with those outlined by Degenaar and Simpson that posit national identity and ethnic particularity as a basis for citizenship, it departs from their views by emphasising socio-economic reconstruction. The divergence in views signifies the precarious nature of post-apartheid nation-building from the perspective of the National Question. Conceptually, nation-building took on a different character to its conventional form of nation-state allegiance and nationalist ideals. Socio-economic redress in post-Apartheid South Africa would require resource allocation to those sectors of society disadvantaged by Apartheid and would need implementation proportionate to levels of deprivation.

¹⁵ Mbeki, T. (1995). *Speech*: ANC National Constitutional Conference. March 31-April 2 1995. World Trade Centre.

The fact that certain groups and communities would be the focus of resource allocation could influence perceptions to the extent where it could renew polarisation of ethnic and cultural identities and social dissent. Similarly, a lack of economic redress would entrench the division, poverty and unequal resource distribution of the past and undermine nation-building in the country. The decisive factor to effect change would, however, be the state's ability to provide for the appropriate redress to enhance democratic transformation and nation-building.¹⁶

In present day South Africa the National Question is less apparent and has lost much of its conceptual vigour as a focus for nation-building. However, issues it initially sought to address like racism, violence, and socio-economic redress are still concerns in contemporary South Africa. In essence, major issues that can be catalysts for ongoing conflict remain, and require appropriate social intervention for change.

1.5 The Truth and Reconciliation Commission

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) is a feature of the transition that is central to the creation of a new South African civil society. It provides an in-depth insight into circumstances in South Africa that require long-term social intervention. Its nature and functioning is an affirmation of counselling, especially multicultural counselling, as part of nation-building in South Africa.

¹⁶ See Barnett, C. (1999) who discusses this relationship in respect of media transformation in South Africa.

The TRC was established on 15 December 1995 and appointed by former President, Nelson Mandela. Drawn mainly from the religious and legal fraternities, the Commission was tasked to provide a comprehensive picture of the nature and extent of Apartheid atrocities. This it had to do by charting gross human rights violations committed by all parties of the Apartheid State and the liberation movements over a period of thirty-three years of Apartheid rule. The designated time for the enquiry was March 1960 to May 1994.¹⁷

As part of its mandate, the Commission had to identify and assess the fate of victims of Apartheid human rights violations. For those who survived, the TRC had to attempt to restore their civil and human dignity by giving them an opportunity to relate their experiences and by recommending appropriate reparations. The Commission also had to decide on the contentious issue of granting or denying amnesty to perpetrators of human rights violations based on full disclosure of their acts. Information on the commission's activities and findings, including recommendations to prevent any recurrence of human rights violations in South Africa, had to be compiled in a detailed report.

The TRC covered many dimensions of South African life under the Apartheid regime. A range of political parties, Apartheid state structures and various sectors of society that included business and labour, faith communities, the health sector, the legal community, children, youth, women, and the media, made submissions. Twenty One Thousand people

¹⁷ Initiatives to explore the nature of a Truth Commission for South Africa based on international experiences preceded the implementation of the TRC. Countries represented in these efforts included Argentina, Uruguay, Chile, El Salvador, Poland, Hungary, Germany, Bulgaria and the Czech Republic. See Borraine, A., Levy, J., and Scheffer, R. (Eds.). (1997).

made submissions, of which twelve percent appeared at public hearings and about seven thousand five hundred perpetrators sought amnesty.¹⁸

The TRC report contextualised the impact of Apartheid on the South African population. It provides contemporary information on the status of mental health and socio-psychological wellbeing in South Africa, both of which are inextricably linked to counselling service provision. It offers data that is current, making it an ideal starting point to explore strategies for multicultural counselling intervention in nation-building.

This is also the preferred starting point for the discussion as the report is a fairly inclusive and balanced account, based on diverse submissions, of the factors that impacted on South African society. This makes it ideal to reflect holistically on prospects for multicultural counselling for the future. Associated with this point is the fact that information on counselling and Apartheid before the transition does not have the advantage of the depth of analysis that the TRC report brings to this perspective. More disconcerting are texts designed to contribute to change but remain rooted in the past to the extent that they offer inappropriate analyses of the South African context for counselling intervention.

The book, *Multicultural Counselling in a Divided and Traumatized Society. The Meaning of Childhood and Adolescence in South Africa* by J. Hickson and S. Kriegler is a case in point. The writers present worldviews of children based on the Apartheid's racial

¹⁸ Cited in the Southern African Catholic Bishops' Conference: Justice and Peace Department Annual Report 1998. See Green-Thompson, A. & O'Leary, S. (1998).

categories and prescribe measures for change. Descriptions include that of 'Black' children preferring 'White' stimulus figures based on an experiment with dolls. Hindu girls are said to be conditioned to speak quietly, walk lightly and be ladylike, and boys instilled with social etiquette to the extent that these children show marked inhibition and lack of spontaneity. 'Coloured' children do not aspire to higher educational levels than their parents, most of whom did not complete primary school, and machismo is socialised into Afrikaner schoolboys through forced participation in rugby. The writers offer guidelines for culturally appropriate counselling in this context and therefore advise:

With respect to Indian, colored, African and Afrikaner culture, nonverbal signs and symbols should also be noted, for the spatial distance between two people during conversation is an important cultural indicator. Anglo-American and British culture require greater distance (about arm's length) between speakers, while Africans, coloreds and Indians may express preference for very small distance (1996:142).

The TRC affords an alternative perspective for social reconstruction based on pertinent information of the impact of Apartheid. The TRC was set up to advance healing and reconciliation in South Africa. At its hearings, detailed narratives and submissions attested to a culture of violence and extreme human rights abuse in South Africa. Values of freedom and humanity were compromised to support an unjust system that perpetuated a culture of interminable violence in the country.

The report places Apartheid in a historical and socio-political perspective. It notes that its mandate period, in the context of the African continent, was the last stage of the struggle for African decolonisation. Fanon's (1967:27) observation is noteworthy.

National liberation, national renaissance, the restoration of nationhood to the people, commonwealth: Whatever may be the headings used or the new formula introduced, decolonisation is always a violent phenomenon.¹⁹

In the South African context, this period marked the culmination of conflicts that had its impetus in the advent of European settlers in the 17th century when they first sought to establish a permanent presence on the sub-continent. Slavery, wars of dispossession, the hunting and elimination of indigenous peoples, concentration camp deaths, genocidal wars and later Apartheid human rights atrocities defined the colonial presence. Apartheid was therefore part of a well-established tradition of excessive use of force and violence against opposition. These atrocities resulted in a society ingrained in a culture of physical and institutional violence.

In assessing the impact of this relentless violence on the people of South Africa, the report notes that Apartheid resulted in wide-scale loss of life, pervasive poverty and lack of opportunities in spheres of life such as housing, education and health. Citizens were exposed to sustained psychological stress, deprivation, dire socio-economic conditions and the trauma of violent state repression. In addition, forced removals through Group Areas and other punitive legislation affected the family, communities, and social systems, which disintegrated along with family functioning.

¹⁹ See Fanon, F. (1967) for an in-depth analysis on the violence and disempowerment that characterises the relationship of the coloniser and colonised. A complementary book is Mamdani, M. (1996).

Family members were also removed from each other for long periods and parents were not available to care for children due to harsh living and distant work conditions to ensure economic survival. Societal violence reflected in high levels of violence in the family, directed primarily at women and children who were subjected to abuse and violence²⁰. Police invasions of homes, arrests, harassment and killings of relatives of political activists or in certain instances of whole family units, as well as enforced separation from family through detention, exile and imprisonment exacerbated social and family disintegration. These factors undermined any sense of family cohesion to ensure stability and development in communities or society at large.

Physical ailments in victims due to torture as well as Post-traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and other mental health problems from sustained trauma added to the disruption of interpersonal, occupational, family and social relations. The situation was compounded by doctors and mental health professionals who were alleged to have advised torturers on how to identify victims, determine thresholds of pain for torture, break down resistance and exploit them accordingly. Diagnosis of mental health illness to confine activists to state institutions and therefore curtail their activities was also alleged. Consequently, victims were often reluctant to acknowledge psychological problems or search for psychological assistance when needed.

²⁰ For a case study analysis of extreme violence against women and children in South Africa's white community, see Russell, D.E.H. (1997). For a similar analysis on Muslim women in South Africa, see Shaikh, S. (1996).

The TRC report notes that Apartheid has affected the mental and psychological well being collectively of the majority of South Africans.²¹ A lack of appropriate intervention services, especially culturally relevant services, and pressing social circumstances that are not conducive to dealing with trauma compound this situation. Accordingly, the TRC report (Vol.1: Ch.11: 371) observes:

The extent of trauma experienced by victims of the policies of the former State is incalculable... This trauma is part of the legacy of apartheid and it will be many years before its effects are eradicated from society... because of the extreme paucity of mental health services in South Africa, the mental health of the many victims of apartheid and indeed of all South Africans will depend on the ability of the new government to work towards the provision of adequate services.

The above outline highlights the trauma and violence of Apartheid on the South African population. It identifies a need for appropriate service provision to ensure effective human and social reconstruction. This is especially so as violence remains a determining factor in the functioning of contemporary South African society.

The Trauma Centre for Victims of Violence and Torture, a human rights organisation in Cape Town, confirms this trend. The centre was initially set up to provide supportive services to political and ex-political prisoners from Robben Island. The Deputy Director of the Centre confirmed that violence in South Africa has transformed from political to criminal violence with escalating levels of crime apparent. The organisation's counselling programme has now shifted its focus to provide relevant services specifically to victims

²¹ Fanon confirms the negative impact of violence and trauma associated with war and decolonisation reflecting on personal experience of psychiatric intervention in the Algerian war. See Fanon, F. (1967).

of bombings, hijackings, armed robberies and related violence. Supportive services are also offered to refugees who are often the target of xenophobic attacks.²²

1.5.1 Religion, Gender and the TRC

The debate of gender and the role of religious groups in Apartheid are important features of the TRC process related to multicultural counselling service provision. It provides additional details on the impact of Apartheid on South African society. It is central to Islamic counselling, where the majority of clients are women who utilise counselling services provided by religious clergy or '*ulamā*'. The TRC findings on religion and gender are therefore overviewed as a broad context to this debate that is explored in later chapters.

A number of religious communities made submissions to the TRC on their role in Apartheid South Africa. In general, the TRC report found that religious communities were complicit in Apartheid society. This was either through direct involvement or through acts of omission. Christianity, for example, was used to sanction Apartheid racial practices, while many religious communities failed to challenge the system or make their adherents aware of the exact nature of Apartheid. According to the TRC, this suggested a tolerance of Apartheid and created an environment for Apartheid to persist. It also diminished the impact of religion in eradicating injustices in South Africa.

²² Interview conducted with the Deputy Director of the Trauma Centre for Victims of Violence and Torture-10 August 2001.

The report states further that missionary initiatives undermined African traditional religious systems, which, as in colonial times, were dismissed as cultural practices (Vol.4.Ch.3). Esack (1997:110) notes likewise that Islam was identified as part of threats to the state. These threats were described as Red (Communist), Black (African), Roman Catholic and Islamic threats. Christianity, in turn, was elevated to the main religion and used to give religious sanction to the Apartheid State. As such, Esack asserts that Apartheid was also about 'Christian Triumphalism' in South Africa.

Faith communities claimed to be racially inclusive. The TRC report challenges this view and contends that religious communities mirrored Apartheid society. Different races worshipped in separate venues and where joint religious services existed, it was confined to the place or duration of worship. The report argues that if inclusive worship was indeed the norm, faith communities would have been a direct challenge to the state and their contribution to the liberation struggle would have been more visible. It adds that the submissions of religious communities showed a lack of reference to the contribution of women and the discrimination that women suffered. A limited inclusion of women in the religious hearings was evident, where only four of sixty-six people who made submissions were women (Vol.4. Ch.3: 79).

The TRC notes a disregard for women and gender issues by religious communities. The Commission, however, similarly overlooked these issues. The TRC convened a series of special hearings on women and gender to explore the role of women in the liberation struggle. The hearings followed a submission by the Centre for Applied Legal Studies at

the University of Witwatersrand. The submission, which was based on a workshop on gender and the TRC, established that the TRC was overlooking the reality of Apartheid due to a lack of gender sensitivity and exploration of Apartheid violations on women. An important factor here was the legal definition and interpretation of gross human rights violations outlined in the Promotion of National Unity and Reconciliation Act as:

Gross violations of human rights means the violation of human rights through (a) the killing, abduction, torture or severe ill-treatment of any person; or (b) any attempt, conspiracy, incitement, instigation, command or procurement to commit and act referred to in paragraph (a).

The report notes that the definition led to oversight of the Apartheid violations that women experienced. It excludes factors like pass law arrests, family disintegration, forced removals, alienation from land, poverty and economic disadvantage, of which women bore the brunt. An emphasis on bodily representation rather than the psychological impact of torture further diminished the impact of violence on women. The traumatic experiences of women were also minimised by their tendency to highlight the suffering of spouses, children's or relatives rather than their own experiences of trauma.

Statistical analysis of evidence submitted to the TRC verifies this trend. A study of two hundred and four testimonies of the first five weeks of the TRC process notes that six of every ten persons who made submission were women. Over three-quarters of their submissions were of abuses to men and seventeen percent were about abuses to women. In contrast, eighty percent of the men's submissions were about men and five percent were about women. Forty- four percent of all cases were of women speaking about a son,

spouse or a brother while there were no cases of men talking of a spouse or sister (Vol.4 Ch.10: 287-290).

Goldblatt and Meintjies (1996) stress that the lack of a gendered perspective of Apartheid human rights violations led to disregard of women's experiences of torture and abuse. Women in Apartheid South Africa were subjected to oppression in respect of race, class and patriarchy. They were cast in roles that limited their civil and political participation in society, were tortured physically and psychologically, were sexually assaulted and abused, and banished when not in possession of a pass.

Societal norms treated women as objects and empowered men to disrespect women and degrade their sexual integrity, as in cases of torture by the police. Ironically, women in their capacity as officers of the state often collaborated in violence, participating in the abuse and torture of other women. Customary law that relegated women to the status of minors and excluded them from resources like property aggravated these circumstances. Single women and widows suffered at the hands of the extended family and were often evicted from homes in the absence or loss of a male spouse. The loss of a spouse increased discrimination based on cultural norms, which added to the difficulties of women.

The writers note that these factors have had continual negative effects on women in South Africa. McEwan (2000) supports this view. She notes that the inability to interpret political participation, socio-economic resources, and employment, and the exclusion

from such services in a gender sensitive manner will disadvantage women despite discourses of equality, equal citizenship and human rights. This would in turn negatively influence the status of citizenship and equal representation of women in society.

1.5.2 Social justice and the TRC

In the above overall context, the issue of justice in the reconstruction of South African society was an important consideration of the TRC. The TRC recommended a process of restorative justice to support healing, reconciliation and nation-building in South Africa. It defined restorative justice as a need to redefine crime from offences against the state to violations against human beings. Justice in turn should rest on reparation, healing and restoration, participation of all concerned in conflict resolution and an accountable criminal justice system.

Restorative justice, it noted, also required reclaiming South Africa's humanity based on religious and moral transformation and therefore the report advised:

We are also required to look again at the restorative dimensions of various traditions...as the Judeo-Christian tradition and African traditional values...both contain strong sources of communal healing and restoration...the fundamental importance of ubuntu must be highlighted. Ubuntu, generally translated as 'humaneness', expresses itself metaphorically in umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu- 'people are people through other people' (Vol.1.Ch.5: 127).

Restorative justice here connects religio-cultural healing to nation-building, making it both an individual and social process. The individual component of this justice is its

focus on the victim. Kiss (2000:73) describes the victim's testimony as victim-centred justice that allows for the restoring of the victim's voice and dignity. Ubuntu, which is a popular metaphor promoted in South Africa to reconcile diverse communities, is a social focus for justice.

Mamdani (1997; 1998a; 1998b) offers important insights into the need for social justice in post-Apartheid South Africa in the context of the TRC process. His view is a fitting paradigm for social reconstruction and appropriate service provision in the country. Mamdani calls for social justice in the form of 'survivor's justice'. He asserts that social justice should be a political imperative that draws all South Africans as survivors into mainstream society based on equality and common political community and citizenship. At the same time, social justice requires dramatic temporary redress to the deprived majority through a share in reformed social institutions to restore their dignity. This redress rests on the same principle as when the rights of the majority were temporarily breached during the transition and the TRC process, to ensure security for the privileged minority as a means to enhance reconciliation. In a similar way, a temporary breach of the rights of the minority, through measures of social justice to accommodate the disadvantaged majority, is an appropriate extension of this reconciliation.

Mamdani stresses the immediacy of such social justice. He notes that South Africa's transition is a case of reconciliation without justice. The TRC sought to establish the truth but did not balance the truth with justice. Green-Thompson & O'Leary (1998:13)

substantiate this view in the Southern African Catholic Bishops' Conference: Justice and Peace Department Annual Report. They state:

At the early stages of the Truth Commission the equation put to victims was the following: 'Tell us what happened. We will find out the truth. The truth will lead to reconciliation. The reality was that many people, having told their story, did not find out the truth. Where the truth was established, it often led to calls for justice. People found it hard to understand that the Truth Commission could not bring justice.

Justice was thus compromised in favour of an elusive truth, and while the TRC encouraged justice as a social process, it could not adequately effect social justice. According to Mamdani, the inability to balance truth and justice in seeking reconciliation is also a denial of the aspirations of the majority of South Africans. The TRC process defined the truth through the experiences of activists and agents rather than by the experiences of the majority. The lack of social justice, in turn, suggests that ordinary people be burdened by the consequences and injustice of Apartheid as the price for reconciliation. He adds that unlike other colonial societies, colonisers and colonised are compelled to live together in South Africa. Without social justice, perpetrators of human rights violations would continue to wield considerable power, and reconciliation would be superficial and mask the continuation of privilege.

The writer highlights potential implications of the situation. He notes that this milieu creates insecure circumstances that instil resentment and hinder true reconciliation. The resentment may be dormant but remains open to later opportunistic manipulation to incite a spiral of revenge under the guise of social justice. For reconciliation to be durable,

political and social reconciliation should then be interconnected and move from the political elite to the broader society. Here the state should be responsible to ensure social justice instead of unduly burdening the majority of South Africans with the task.²³

Mamdani offers a cogent view of social justice that supports a common humanity through societal participation, redress and responsibility by all in South Africa's reconstruction. His view lends support for multicultural counselling service provision to be a component of and a means to facilitate social justice in South Africa. However, while he argues for social justice as limited redress so that justice with no bounds does not incite revenge in the same way as reconciliation that masks privilege may do, counselling as social justice would be an ongoing process.

Pervasive social problems and the fact that counselling focuses on human transformation make long-term intervention essential. That social problems in society will endure and human transformation requires continual effort necessitates an ongoing process. Furthermore, social justice in South Africa, in addition to redress, requires creating awareness of the nature and injustice of Apartheid and its impact, and devising ways to deal therewith. In this context counselling as social justice would require long-term individual and social intervention to be effective.

²³ For a similar critical analysis of the TRC see Adam, H. (1998).

1.5.3 The TRC as a Counselling Process

The above overview conveys the TRC finding of the impact of Apartheid on South African society. It outlines important components of multicultural counselling as part of nation-building in respect of gender, religion and social justice, and simultaneously affirms a role for multicultural counselling in post-apartheid reconstruction. The TRC process itself offers the strongest endorsement of multicultural counselling in social reconstruction. Three aspects of the TRC process support this view.

The TRC modelled a social counselling process. Victims of Apartheid violations relayed experiences of suffering to the Commission that absorbed and contained this suffering by giving victims an opportunity to talk about and deal with their anguish. The report (Vol1.Ch.6: 140) affirms its counselling content, which it describes in varied ways. It notes, for example, that the statement-taking process made it possible to gather information from victims on gross human rights violations and:

...It served a therapeutic purpose in that it provided victims with an opportunity to speak about their suffering or that of their families to people who listened sympathetically and acknowledged their pain.

A similar description is made of hearings as a moral and therapeutic process designed to acknowledge suffering and give victims and opportunity to tell their stories. In fact, counselling was intrinsic to the TRC process. It extended to consultation with counselling practitioners, referrals and service provision to participants, and skills training to staff to

ensure appropriate intervention. As such, the Commission functioned as a social counselling structure taking counselling into social spheres and public space.

The Commission integrated religious tenets into its approach. The notion of healing and reconciliation through repentance and redemption encouraged by former Archbishop and Chairperson of the Commission, Desmond Tutu, was an integral part of the TRC process. Tutu's view was criticised for its Christian perspective and considered inappropriate for South Africa's multi-religious society. This bias notwithstanding, the TRC illustrated that it is possible to integrate religion in wide-scale social reconstruction and further urged its use in nation-building. Given the TRC's social counselling component and its religio-cultural content then, the TRC in fact functioned as a multicultural social counselling mechanism.

The last feature of the TRC that reinforces the role of multicultural counselling in nation-building is the Commission's inability, due to limited resources, to implement a comprehensive programme of long-term social intervention as part of post-apartheid nation-building. The report (Vol.1.Ch.6: 146) confirms that the commission was often cautioned for failing to ensure follow-up counselling and to adequately liaise with local counselling services. A comment by a participant at a Commission hearing on women captures this lack of intervention as she states:

I know...the Truth Commission has got a programme of therapy, but I hope it can be sustained, because my own experience in the few months has been that some of the women whose wounds you opened – we did not pay enough time or give them enough opportunity to heal once they left these halls...those wounds they need to be addressed...You cannot open them in the hall and leave them gaping. Somebody has got to take responsibility (Vol.5 Ch. 9: 355-356).

The multicultural social approach of the TRC confirms the role of multicultural counselling in nation-building in South Africa which is reinforced by the inability of the TRC to implement comprehensive measures for social transformation in South Africa. In this respect, one of its most important contributions of the TRC to nation-building is the focus it offers for further social service provision. By presenting a significant insight into the nature of South African society, it implemented a valuable process that has produced vital information to guide future change in the country. This has made it possible to locate multicultural counselling in the transition and to identify for it a role and direction in nation-building.

1.6 Summary

The above exposition overviewed the transition in South Africa. It covered pertinent issues, in particular the National Question and the TRC, to assess circumstances that makes multicultural counselling necessary in nation-building. It presented various inputs on nation-building, including the design adopted by the state. Given the prevailing social conflicts during the transition, the state premised nation-building on reconciling diverse identities based on ethnic expression in a non-racial democracy and socio-economic redress.

The TRC encouraged social, human, and moral reconstruction through healing and reconciliation, which added to a unique design of nation-building for post-apartheid South Africa. The TRC provided a platform to comprehend the nature of Apartheid as a

crime against humanity.²⁴ With this awareness, it sought to look ahead and reconcile South Africans to a new humanity based on moral and human dignity and mutual respect. This was vital to South African society that was in dire need of restoring a sense of common humanity.

Together the National Question and the TRC identified pressing social circumstances in South Africa as a result of Apartheid. South Africa's transition signified a time of liberation and significant improvement in the status of the population in respect of political freedom and equality. The process was disrupted by ongoing human rights violations and aggravated by an environment entrenched in a culture of violence. This amplified a contradiction of a democratic order characterised by severe social disintegration.

In this milieu, issues of identity, culture, religion, gender, social justice and resource allocation were identified as central to social intervention in South Africa. This was the framework within which to assess the role of multicultural counselling as part of nation-building. The analysis overviewed the need for appropriate counselling service provision in civil society to enhance social reconstruction and the responsibility of the state in the process.

²⁴ Apartheid was recognised as a crime against humanity by several organisations including the United Nations, The International Court of Justice, The International Law Commission, The Convention the Non-applicability of Statutory limitations to War and Crimes against Humanity, and the African Charter on Human and Peoples Rights (TRC Report Vol.1. Ch.4: 94-97).

The Constitution underscores the role of the state. The Constitution was central to the immediate transformation in post-Apartheid South Africa. It was a mechanism to stabilise society, maintain a spirit of peaceful political progress and extend this progress to ensure the progressive democratisation of the country. The Constitution alludes to the struggle for liberation and provides a framework for nation-building as noted in its preamble.

It is a declaration of what is required to attain change and provides an ideal to achieve such change. It initiated the concrete expression of liberation in South Africa and offers goals that are fundamental to a democratic society. The Constitution is the foundation of the state's commitment to nation-building and binds the state to the process. State intervention to enhance social reconstruction is therefore critical to South Africa's democratic order.

This exposition has clearly identified the role and need for multicultural counselling in post-apartheid nation-building. In the context of South Africa's circumstances as outlined in this chapter, multicultural counselling service provision to facilitate nation-building requires a state intervention that fosters tolerance and respect for diversity, promotes healing and reconciliation, and encourages socio-economic redress. The following chapter explores this possibility of multicultural counselling in an analysis of Islamic counselling service provision to the Muslim community in South Africa.

CHAPTER 2

Muslims in South Africa: A historical overview

2.1 Introduction

This chapter explores the role of Islamic counselling in nation-building with reference to the Muslim community in South Africa. It presents a historical overview of the Muslim community in colonial and Apartheid South Africa to identify their status in the society and the impact of this milieu on the community. The aim is to show the nature of colonial and Apartheid oppression on Muslims as a community within the larger South African society that makes Islamic counselling service provision necessary.

Recorded history of Muslims in South Africa concentrates on political and organisational leadership and development. This tract seeks a balance by emphasising a socio-psychological dimension of this history, which provides greater clarity for an assessment of the feasibility of Islamic counselling in the community and its role in nation-building. The exposition examines the role of Muslims in South Africa. Its geographical focus is the Western Cape, which is the fieldwork research area of the study. This is an area where resistance by Muslims to colonial and Apartheid South Africa was concentrated, which allows for a comparative study of Muslim participation in South African society.

2.2 The History of Muslims in South Africa: Introduction

Information on Muslims in South Africa rests on the works of scholars who have studied the history of the community from their first arrival in the Cape. These studies focus on archival research and document analysis, travelogues, oral testimonies and observer accounts of early Muslim life. Notable scholars in this respect are Davids, Bradlow and Cairns, and Shell, with Davids generally recognised as a leading authority in the field of enquiry. The scholars explore the history of Muslims focussing on themes that stress their early arrival as a slave community, religious leadership and the practice of Islam.

Subsequent academic studies of Muslims in South Africa rely on this information for ongoing analyses of Muslim religious and societal life. They explore these themes to produce information that maintains this earlier focus and concentrates it further on political and organisational development. Muslim political organisations in Apartheid South Africa and '*ulamā*' conservatism are focal points of these analyses. This approach is evident in the works of Esack, Moosa, Tayob, Cassim, and Jeppie.

In the Apartheid period the debate evolved into significant treatises that highlight Muslim religious, organisational and political rivalry. Different sectors of Muslim society each asserted its role as representative of the views, attitudes and experiences of the community. Inter-organisational rivalry combined a parallel process that challenged the '*ulamā*' who, despite their conservatism, held considerable sway in the community. The discourse of affirming an organisational role and challenging others continued to the

transition and beyond into the post-apartheid period. A comment in the submission of the Muslim Youth Movement to the TRC depicts this communication where it notes:

In 1983 a high-powered delegation led by the Muslim Youth Movement (MYM) met with the Jamiatul '*ulamā*' Transvaal, to canvass Muslim support in condemning the first Tricameral Parliament elections. The Jamiatul '*ulamā*' was the only major Muslim grouping that refused to endorse this campaign, thereby, in our view being silent accomplices to National Party rule (1997:106).

The implication of this discourse is an account of Muslims in South Africa that focuses intervention politically at religious, organisational and leadership levels. From a counselling perspective, it ignores information on the nature of Muslim social and communal life which is central to Islamic counselling intervention.

The role and status of women in the Muslim community offers an illustration. In contemporary Muslim communities in the Western Cape, Muslim women who are subjected to violence and abuse in the home is the majority client composition of Islamic counselling.²⁵ The '*ulamā*' are the main service providers of Islamic counselling based on a male-centred interpretation of Qur'ānic texts which disadvantages women. At this level of communal interaction the '*ulamā*' remain unchallenged. The focus of intra-political rivalry leads to oversight of these circumstances, while '*ulamā*' conservatism reinforces it.

²⁵ Information based on an Islamic Social and Welfare Association (ISWA) Report 2001 obtained from the organisation, and research findings of the Muslim Judicial Council (MJC) survey 2001.

Where scholars propose women's rights it presents as political expediency and elitist analysis. The MYM, for example, dedicates its submission to the TRC to Muslim political activists of the Apartheid era including women. It excludes, though, any mention of the role and status of Muslim women during the time. Esack likewise writes fervently on Muslim women's rights and the need for gender justice. His focus on Qur'ānic textual analysis of violence against women overlooks the actual experiences of women in the Muslim community that are central to gender and justice.²⁶ In the absence of this focus, treatises on women's rights ironically present as expedient or imposed by male scholars, and risk male assertion albeit in a different form, over women in the Muslim community. In Islamic social intervention it detracts from a client-based perspective, which is participatory and consistent with the needs of clients.

In this respect, a study by Shaikh (1996) on violence against women in the Muslim community, which integrates Qur'ānic textual analysis and narratives of women's experiences, is an insightful alternative. A study by Meer (1969) on the pressing conditions of the Indian community is a like analysis. These expositions explore, with greater depth and awareness, concerns of the Muslim community. In this regard, a history of Muslims in South Africa that includes detailed analyses of women in colonial and Apartheid society is still outstanding.

²⁶ See in particular, Esack. F. - What Do Men Owe to Women? Islam & Gender Justice: Beyond Simplistic Apologia. <<http://uk.geocities.com/faridesack/fewhatdomenowe.html>> Accessed: 4 July 2002.

This chapter explores a socio-psychological perspective of the history of Muslims in South Africa. It uses available information to isolate issues that offer an insight into the experiences of the community's functioning in colonial and Apartheid South Africa. It integrates the information to move from a political to a social focus of the community that is consistent with an analysis of Islamic counselling and nation-building.

The exposition overviews the arrival of the first Muslims in the Cape and life under colonial rule. It notes the diversity of the Muslim community and outlines the practice of Islam during this time. It shows how, in the Muslim community, religion was the primary basis of colonial oppression. Islam in turn informed Muslim societal and communal participation, which took on certain features that defined their input throughout mainstream South African society.

Initially, religio-cultural activities bound the community to a sense of common humanity and offered respite from colonial oppression. Collective action and individual and organisational opposition to the state in the colonial and the Apartheid period led to notable challenges to the system that contributed to the liberation struggle. The section includes an overview of such Muslim political participation in South Africa from the 20th century to the transition.

This participation was also characterised by collaboration with the colonial regime, attempts at political representation, and communal dissent. In the colonial period communal dissent focused on the position of the Imam, while in the later Apartheid era

the focus was on intra-political rivalry, especially in challenges to '*ulamā*' conservatism. Socio-political action and inaction ensued that, together with the sustained repression of colonialism and Apartheid, has seen disintegration in the Muslim community with wide-scale social problems and an oversight by leadership in addressing these concerns. This chapter essentially asserts that Muslims, whether in the past as oppressed or in the present as liberated, are fundamentally linked to the functioning of South African society, including nation-building and social reconstruction. As such, the role and need for Islamic counselling in nation-building in South Africa unfolds with greater clarity.

2.3 The Muslim Community in South Africa: Population Composition

The Muslim community is one of many minority groups in South Africa and has been present in the country for close to three hundred and fifty years. It is a diverse, multicultural group of people as a community by Islam. According to the 1996 census, Muslims in South Africa total 553 585 people in a population estimate of forty one million, although Muslims themselves give estimates of over a million people.²⁷

The advent of 17th century Dutch colonisation in the Cape and its concomitant slave trade where colonists acquired slaves from the 'Malay Archipelago', ensured the first presence

²⁷ Source - Statistics South Africa - Cape Town Office (2002). The 1991 census recorded 324 400 Muslims in South Africa. It is likely that Muslims are numerically a larger community than indicated by census of the Apartheid period as well as the above estimates taken during the transition. Outstanding results of a census conducted in 2001 should be informative, given that South African society has stabilised significantly since 1994.

of Muslims in South Africa.²⁸ In 1652, the Dutch colonist, Jan van Riebeeck, arrived in the Cape. His party included eastern slaves but since uncertainly exists as to whether these slaves were Muslim, the first confirmed Cape Muslims are the Mardykens.

The term Mardykens derives from the Portuguese word *Meredika* and the original Sanskrit *Maharddika* that meant prosperity and eminence. In the slave context of the East, it meant freedom from slavery (Shell 1995:3). The Mardykens were free persons from the Southern Moluccan Islands. They arrived in the Cape in 1658 as a servant labour force for the colonist, to protect the Dutch settlement from resistance by the country's indigenous populations (Davids 1980; Da Costa 1994).

From this period emerged a Muslim population in South Africa that stem from different slave arrivals into the country and integration with indigenous and European settler populations through intermarriage and conversions to Islam. Descriptions of this population composition of Muslims differ. The common broad distinctions are of Cape Muslims including converts from the indigenous populations, Indian Muslims in the Kwazulu-Natal region who arrived first as indentured labourers and later as traders, and slaves from Zanzibar who were settled in Durban.

²⁸ The Muslim slave population from the East originated from South East Asia and its surrounding islands, which is commonly referred to as the Indonesian Archipelago. Bradlow notes that Indonesia was a term not used before 1884, when it was coined by a German ethnography student to refer to what was known as the Malay archipelago, which included today's Malaysia, Indonesia and its 13 000 islands. See Bradlow, F. & Cairns, M. (1978).

Esack (1997) notes this view while Sonn (1994) excludes the Zanzibaris and identifies African converts as a third component of Muslims in South Africa in addition to Cape and Indian Muslims. Tayob (1991) also identifies indigenous converts to Islam as a distinct group of Muslims in South Africa. He distinguishes between those who converted in the Cape Muslim community during the 19th century and recent 20th century conversions of indigenous African Muslims through missionary activity.²⁹ A breakdown of these distinctions reveals a diverse and multi-faceted community whose origins Bradlow (1978:7) describes as:

These diverse people from the Islands of the Indies, from Madagascar and from India proper, and from North, East and West of the Cape, were thrown together in a melting pot at the Cape.

To clarify, after the first arrival of Muslims in the Cape, political exiles, labourers, prisoners and slaves from the South East Asian regions and parts of India settled in the Cape and were referred to as 'Cape Malays'.³⁰ This group later embraced converts from the indigenous communities and the general slave population.

Subsequent arrivals of Muslims in South Africa were in Kwazulu-Natal from Java (1858) India (1860), and East Africa (1873-80) as part of British indentured labour policies in the

²⁹ Dangor asserts that a unique expression of Islam in South Africa may emerge from this Muslim group and identifies the Murābitūn as indicative of this trend. See Dangor, S. (1997).

³⁰ The preferred term is Cape Muslims as 'Cape Malay' is of linguistic origin. According to Bradlow Malay was a trading language that spanned from the Malay Archipelago to China, Malagasy and the Cape, hence classification of Muslims in the Cape by this language usage. The term Cape Muslims is then more representative of Muslims in the Cape who were not all from the Malay Archipelago. See Bradlow, F. & Cairns, M. (1978).

19th century (Aziz: 1996: 443). According to Aziz, the latter group was referred to as Zanzibaris but included people from Malawi, Mozambique, Zambia, Somalia and Zanzibar. He notes that the first Muslims in Natal were also Chinese and Malay slaves from Java who were imported by the British in 1858 to fill labour shortages at the Umzinto Sugar Company.

Bradlow (1978) points to a general diversity in the Cape that influenced the Muslim population composition. He cites selected lists of transactions on slaves and 'free blacks' between 1658 and 1824 that include areas like Indo-china, Japan, Madagascar, Ceylon, Malaya, Mauritius, Philippines, Siam, Persia and Arabia. These were isolated cases and more significant arrivals of slaves, many of whom were Muslim, were from Guinea, Angola and Dahomey in Africa. In a like analysis of slave records, Da Costa (1994:2) identifies cases of 'immigrants' to South Africa from countries including the Philippines, Vietnam, the West Indies and Brazil, as well as those captured off European ships.³¹

Muslims scholars from the Middle East and Africa commissioned to arbitrate in local religious disputes, who settled here and at times became embroiled in the disputes, added to the diverse composition of Muslims in South Africa. The Kurdish scholar Abū Bakr Effendi is the classic example in this regard, while voluntary settlements of scholars were

³¹ Da Costa's description of slaves as 'immigrants' is a euphemism that does not fully reflect the suffering of the slave populations. It suggests voluntary migration and is therefore an unsuitable description. Bradlow, for example, notes the high mortality rates amongst slaves, that included children uprooted from their parents, who were often exhausted to the point that many died on arrival or were 'useless' for labour purposes. Bradlow's own description of the 'immigration' of the early Muslims as 'one of the most romantic sagas in South Africa history' is then also inappropriate. See Bradlow, F. & Cairns, M. (1978).

from areas like Saudi Arabia and Turkey. The first Imam of the Cape was also from Yemen.

The South African Muslim community then cut across social, class, cultural, racial and ethnic barriers, with strong links to other religio-cultural communities, which today makes the community a microcosm of the country's multicultural society. In post-apartheid South Africa, increased migration of Muslims from Central and North Africa, the Middle East, and the Indo-Pakistan subcontinent is a new influence on the diversity of Muslims that simulates anew the history of Muslims in diversity and integration.

2.4 Muslims and Islam in Colonial South Africa

The above population composition gives the Muslim community its diversity. The practice of Islam gives the community a dynamic history that has informed their role and contribution in South African society to the present. The history of Muslims in South Africa is essentially one of a diverse, displaced and dispossessed people brought to the country under hostile conditions of colonialism, slavery, and human and labour exploitation. Da Costa (1994: 17) describes these conditions:

...It is one of the ironies of history that the colonial barbarism that swept Africa and Asia... was the direct cause of the earliest migration of Muslim peoples to the Cape. They came mainly against their will, forcibly removed from their families and their communities and with nothing to their names but the cultural elements that they brought with them. One of these elements was the religion of Islam...

The repressive nature of these circumstances is consistent with the legacy of systematic colonial violence against people or opposition noted in the TRC report. Davids (1994:62) asserts that Islam was central to the lives of slaves to withstand the harsh realities of their lives. A debate that questions the extent to which Islam was an entrenched religion in the Malay Archipelago in the 17th century and hence whether slaves arriving in the Cape were Muslims cast doubt on such assertions. Shell (1974) argues that this Islamic influence was limited, as Islam was not at the time rooted in Indonesia, which was dominated by an 'Indic' culture. Similarly, the role of political exiles banished to the Cape from the region and who were more familiar with Islam was minimal. In an opposing view, Bradlow (1978) and Da Costa (1994) note that many slaves from the Far East, India and Africa were in fact Muslim by the time they arrived in the Cape. The writers assert that the areas the slaves had come from were significantly Islamised by then.

According to Shell, the establishment and spread of Islam in the Cape was due to "company convicts" who were sent to the Cape by the Dutch East Indian Company to serve sentences on Robben Island. These "convicts" whose convictions are generally not indicated, were sentenced to cheap or hard labour, often for life, for offences committed in their countries of origin. The term 'convicts' in the absence of records of offences does not fully reflect the experiences or resistance to the colonial regime by those banished to the Cape.

Shell (1974:32) notes, for example, that the first Cape Imam, Said Aloewie, was sent to serve an eleven-year sentence on Robben Island. He describes Aloewie as possibly a missionary in Indonesia who “subsequently fell foul of the VOC” or else was sent directly from his home country, Yemen. On completion of his sentence, Said Aloewie was classed as a “free black”. In a position of relative freedom he was able to work and establish himself sufficiently to - like other ‘free blacks’ - hold religious functions and propagate Islam, which Shell asserts signified the start of the ‘*ulamā*’ class in South Africa.

The writer adds that factors that reinforced Islam in the Cape was legislation in 1770 that was interpreted by slave owners to mean that Christian slaves could not be held in bondage. This made Christian slaves economically impractical and hence slave owners encouraged slaves towards Islam to ensure their ongoing availability for socio-economic and labour purposes. A perceived advantage was a skilled, sober workforce with lesser contributing factors including the role of Imams in allowing slaves to marry. Slaves were not allowed to marry until 1826, while Imams conducted marriages which influenced conversions to Islam.

The contention of the arrival of Muslims to the Cape notwithstanding, Islam was significant in the lives of the slave community. It was also the basis of discrimination and restrictions against Muslims in colonial South Africa. Davids (1980) notes that from the onset the practice of Islam were a major concern for the colonist. Islam posed a particular threat to Dutch colonisation as, prior to their settlement in the Cape, Muslim sultanates of

South East Asia had successfully resisted the Dutch. There the strongest resistance had come from areas where Islam was established. Based on the analysis of Shell, this would be from persons who used Islam as the basis for their action rather than having lived in established Islamic environments. As many of the conquered Muslims leaders of these wars were sent to the Cape, a precarious situation presented itself to the colonists.

In the Cape, some of these prisoners were known as the *Orang Cayen*. They were influential political exiles who were isolated from the main slave population to minimise their impact on them and prevent their escape. The best known of the *Orang Cayen* is Shaykh Yusuf of Macassar, who today is considered the spiritual founder of Islam in South Africa. His grave and those of other notable Islamic scholars called *Karamats* (Saints) are spread across the Cape Peninsula and are sites of veneration in Muslim religio-cultural activity.

Weary of their experiences in South East Asia, the Dutch legislated against the practice of Islam in the Cape. This took the form of a 'Placaat' first issued in Amboyna from where the Mardykens hailed and re-issued in the Cape in 1657. This edict prohibited the public although not private practice of Islam as well as attempts to convert Christians and 'heathens' to Islam, which were actions punishable by death. In addition, in terms of a set of laws called the Statutes of India that governed the Cape, only the practices of the Reformed Protestant Church were allowed. Other congregations were punishable by banishment, forfeiture of property, corporal punishment, or death. Those who adopted Christianity though were given advantages, and according to Davids service provision

like poor relief, education, and welfare was designed to draw Muslims to Christianity which was seen as the civilising force of humanity (Davids 1994; 1980).

In fact, throughout the history of Islam in South Africa, concerted efforts were made to convert Muslims to Christianity. This action continued unabated until as recently as 1986. Haron (1999) notes that in 1986 the synod of the Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk (Dutch Reformed Church) passed a resolution that unanimously accepted Islam as a false religion. The resolution included the description of Islam as a challenge to Christianity in South Africa, Africa, and the world. Haron identifies similar remarks in the 1920's made by a Professor J. Du Plessis at an inter-church evangelical conference. Du Plessis described Islam as a defective moral concept and Muslims as functioning on a non-intellectual level.

These statements were part of a tradition of negative stereotyping that in the initial period included perceptions of Muslims as unpredictable, passive but potentially disruptive, with a tendency to 'run amok'.³² These views were later transformed to perceptions of Muslims as obedient and acquiescent, which appear related to '*ulamā*' conservatism during the Apartheid era. Esack (1988:475), for example, observes that when Muslims engaged mass protest action during the 1960's, the Parliament expressed disbelief at this

³² Amok is listed in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders as a culture-bound syndrome to be considered in diagnosing patients where appropriate. It was originally reported in Malaysia and is described as a dissociative episode, characterised by an outburst of violent, aggressive or homicidal behavior directed at people and objects and prevalent amongst males. See American Psychiatric Association. (1994). In the context of this discussion a link between amok and slavery would be an interesting study. A related point is a diagnosis of mental illness found in nineteenth century American textbooks, called Drapetomania to describe slaves who escaped from their masters. See, May (2001).

action. They had considered Muslims as the “most law-abiding”, “most loyal” and “most peaceful section of the Non-European population”. In the post-apartheid period negative stereotyping of Muslims re-emerged. This followed large-scale Muslim participation in PAGAD (People against Gangsterism and Drugs), an anti-drug campaign initiated in 1996 that provoked violence between druglords and PAGAD and a concomitant association of Muslims with Islamic militancy.

A large part of Muslim life in the initial period revolved around compromising and negotiating the practice of Islam in a society that expressed overall hostility to those subjected to colonial policies. Early Islam in South Africa was a guarded private activity where prayer and religious practices were conducted from different homes. Despite the restrictive environment, Muslims continued to worship in this way and thrived as a religious community.

Like Shell, Davids note that prisoners who were banished to the Cape from 1743 onwards for incarceration at Robben Island or for cheap labour achieved the further consolidation of Islam. The majority of these prisoners remained in the Cape on completion of their sentences and was known as the ‘Vryezwarten’ or the ‘free black’ community. The most renowned Muslims of this group are Said Aloewie, the first Imam in the Cape, and Imam Abdullah Kadi Abdus Salaam. They are known as Tuan Said and Tuan Guru (Mister Teacher) respectively. These religious leaders facilitated the consolidation of Islam by publishing books and propagating Islam from their homes. They engaged religious and

related activities to facilitate the practice of Islam, including petitioning a site for a mosque that was refused at the time.

In the main, Muslim religious and communal life was isolated from mainstream society. Davids (1994: 60) states that Islam was tolerated but was not sanctioned, and limited religious tolerance was marred by other difficulties placed on the community. He describes the situation.

They were denied Burgership rights, their marriages were declared unlawful and their children degraded. They needed special permission and ample security to stay in the colony...They were subject to arbitrary arrest. Their homes were entered and searched by the police at their own discretion and without warrants. They were required to carry passes and man the fire brigade as a gratuitous service for the authorities. Tremendous restrictions were placed on the freedom of movement.

Davids contends that under these circumstances, 'a ceremonial rather than a resistant form of Islam' prevailed in the Cape. Communal life was structured around religious-cultural activities. Religious and cultural celebrations like the *Merang*, *Rhatieb*, *Gadat*, *Tamat*, *Mouloud*, and *Rampie-sny* provided community cohesion and offered participants respite from their suffering.³³

³³ *Merang* and *Gadat* are communal prayer meetings. *Rhatieb* is a religio-cultural activity in which the body is pierced with skewers and hit with swords to religious chanting without sustaining physical injury. *Tamat* is the graduation ceremony of children from madrassah. *Mouloud* celebrates the Prophet's birthday and *Rampie-sny*, also, known as the Festival of Orange Leaves, was the accompanying female activity to celebrate the Prophet's birthday. See Davids, A. (1980). These activities are still practised in the Cape Muslim community today.

It attracted many slaves who were encouraged to feel that despite their bondage, their souls were free and that real freedom awaited them in the Hereafter. In fact, these activities were designed to attract converts to Islam. Slaves led the ceremonies and through the institution of '*Barakat*', food was shared with those who could not attend. As the environment enhanced a sense of identity and equality amongst different groups of oppressed people, it did then draw non-Muslim slaves to embrace Islam.

In 1804, religious freedom was granted in the Cape spurred partially by the spirit of liberalism in Europe. This religious freedom was however limited to a declaration of equality of religious communities. Actual religious practice and the construction of places of worship remained subject to permission from the Governor. Religious freedom to Muslims was also advanced in what may be described as 'loyalty for land' deals.

Here the participation of "free blacks" in war on the side of the Dutch against an impending British invasion was secured on the promise of land for burial grounds and a mosque site. In 1806, Muslims were deployed in the '*Javaansche Artilleries*' in the Battle of Blaauwberg. The burial site was secured but no land for the mosque was given (Tayob 1995b: 44). A former slave woman, Saartjie van de Kaap, subsequently donated land for the first mosque, the Auwal mosque.

A similar deal was effected with later participation in the battle of the Axe in 1846, where Cape Muslims were conscripted as the '*Malay Corps*' on the side of the British against the indigenous population. Described as picturesque soldiers wearing, on their heads, red

cotton handkerchiefs like turbans, Muslim participation in war was with accompanying zeal. In this war however they rebelled when the government recanted on promises to provide for their families.

Many were imprisoned, after which time they were reported to be sufficiently calm about the war to lie about, whistling and singing melodious choruses. They were hurriedly discharged from the military and in 1851 received a building site for a mosque as agreed to in the Battle of the Axe. This is the Jamia mosque situated in Cape Town. It is also known as the Queen Victoria mosque to honour the Queen who it was believed sanctioned the land grant (Davids 1980:140).

While religious freedom was granted and Muslims collaborated with the ruling regime they remained a subjugated people. The final emancipation of the slaves was in 1838. Discrimination and prejudice, however, remained an ingrained part of colonial society. To illustrate, selective municipal and parliamentary franchises were granted in 1839 and 1853 respectively, to sectors in the community that made it possible for some Muslims to vote in elections. Exclusion was based on criteria of income, education, 'civilised standards' and property qualifications, which was changed by the ruling powers as suited their needs.

In the 1894 parliamentary elections, Achmat Effendi, the son of Abū Bakr Effendi, attempted to represent Muslims in parliament. Legislative changes initiated and supported by Cecil John Rhodes and the Afrikaner Bond were enacted to exclude such

representation. A parliamentarian gave expression to the sentiments of the time. He noted that “there are only a few members in the House who would be willing to have a Malay or Coloured man seated beside them”, adding that providence did not imply equality between inferior races and whites (Davids: 1981:192/193). The ‘Effendi Bill’³⁴ was adopted, which limited collective voting and with further vigorous rallying by candidates against Effendi he was subsequently defeated and was excluded from parliament. This election campaign was the only attempt by a Muslim to gain a seat in the then Cape Parliament.

Muslim marriages were also not legally recognised and children considered illegitimate. In the 19th century, this was a means to exclude Muslims from certain civil posts reserved for persons born in wedlock. Muslim marriages remain without legal status throughout the Apartheid era and this is still the case although consultation on the matter is current and legislation forthcoming.³⁵

Besides Effendi’s effort, the Muslim community generally avoided mainstream politics. In the face of direct threats from the state, Muslims did partake in protest action. The 1886 Cemetery Riots, considered the first urban uprising in South Africa, was the most significant expression of civil disobedience by the community. A series of punitive state measures during 19th century smallpox epidemics hastened this action. These included

³⁴ The Constitution Ordinance Amendment Bill. Later the Constitution Ordinance Amendment Act No 16 of 1893 enacted on 25 August 1893. Davids, A. (1980).

³⁵ See South African Law Commission. (2001). Discussion Paper 101. Project 59. Islamic Marriages and related matters.

hospital restrictions on halāl foods, the denial of Islamic burial rites and ritual ablution for those who died from smallpox, and demands for Muslims to bury their dead in coffins (Esack 1997).

Muslims spurned these laws and refused medical treatment, claiming that their afflictions were due to Divine Will. Davids notes that the community also thought these measures discriminatory and enforced moreover to minimise risk to the nearby white population rather than out of genuine concern. The authorities had otherwise ignored dire social conditions of Muslims in the Cape.

The closure of cemeteries in terms of the Public Health Act No 4 of 1883 with an offer of alternative distant burial grounds was a breaking point for the community. Muslims argued that walking to the cemetery was a religious obligation and rejected the new burial site as too far. The community held a protest march and buried a child in defiance of the state. Riots ensued and martial law was imposed for three days. The government defeated the resistance and Muslims had to compromise on their position and later accepted alternative burial grounds in a suburb called Observatory.

In the colonial period, the primary basis of discrimination against Muslims was religion. As a slave community, they endured colonial policies of inequality and oppression and social ostracism through stereotyping and exclusion. The position of the Imam in this milieu offers further insight into these circumstances and its influence on Muslim communal interaction.

2.5 The Imam in Colonial South Africa

In the early Muslim community, the ruling regime generally went unchallenged unless Muslims were under direct threat as in the cemetery riots. Political involvement took root in the community but rather than directed at the state, evolved around a communal dynamic that centred on the authority of the Imam. According to Davids, the Imam was regarded as the leader and spiritual guide of the community and communal solidarity was secured through him. This elevated status saw him take on multiple roles that included that of a welfare advisor, medical officer, and social and financial advisor.

The position of Imam was a sought after appointment that secured social, religious, and communal prestige not only for the Imam but also for his assistants and family members.

Davids (1980: 125) describes the status of the Imam. He notes:

The position of the Imam became very important. It presented to them their highest attainment, the status symbol above all status symbols...The Imam... was called up for a host of other religious duties...The Imam was the most powerful person, having total control over his entire congregation...The Imams received generous donations from his congregates and could lead a life of fair comfort without having to toil for an income.

Jeppie (1996) confirms that 19th century Imams were respected as leaders in the community. They were financially and materially independent and owned properties and possessions beyond that of the ordinary person. Many were employed and their affluence was a significant factor in their positions as religious leaders that was also mediated through participation in religious ritual practices. Jeppie notes that they were “modest in

their political ambitions” and held a conformist position, avoiding conflict with authority. Imams therefore did not significantly challenge the status quo. In fact, they participated in and reinforced societal power relations of division, including slavery, by keeping slaves themselves.

In the Muslim community, the Imam, however, remained a revered, charismatic personality in whom respect and power was vested and who was seen as the highest mediator of socio-religious and cultural life. In these circumstances a religious hierarchy developed. The Imam headed this order. He normally had two assistant Imams or *Gatieps* whose status depended on their seniority. They led the congregation when the Imam was incapacitated and stood to succeed him. Following the *Gatieps* were the *Bilals* or *Muazzins* who gave the call to prayer. The *Marabouts* or *malboets* were on the lowest rung of this officialdom whose main task was to liaise directly with the community by relaying important messages to them.

Dauids (1980; 1981) asserts that this religious order emerged to compensate for a sense of inferiority and negative self-image that developed amongst Muslims due to the repressive circumstances of the colonial state. This inferiority he infers, for example, from the way in which Imams addressed authority in correspondence like, ‘I fall at your feet and beg forgiveness for intruding upon your time’ and would then state a case or concern (1995: 66). This, he argues, led Muslims to seek social status amongst themselves exemplified in the position of the Imam.

He also notes though that religious officials subsequently developed as an aristocracy with a status that surpassed that of ordinary Muslims. Islamic knowledge that ultimately secured leadership positions became the preserve of a few selected families. For those whom the clerical order did not accommodate a pilgrimage to Mecca could elevate social status, which many people did then undertake.

In this context, the position of the Imam in the growing Muslim community was fervently contested, with Imams keen to secure positions for their sons even if they were not qualified for a post. This rivalry was the cause of much conflict in the community and gave rise to a tradition of dissent that focused on doctrinal issues and issues of the rights and appointments of Imams. Thus, in the period 1866 to 1900 over twenty cases were heard in the Supreme Court that involved challenging the position of the Imam (Davids 1980:5).

This commonly resulted in breakaway congregations, with new mosques constructed and led by competing Imams. Redress through the Supreme Court was a pattern of most mosques in the Cape area. Cases included allegations of religious malpractice, assault (in one instance with a teapot), Imams found guilty of disturbing the peace and fined accordingly, barring entrance to the mosque, family dissent, violation of sacred space, as when an Imam rushed to a pulpit with shoes on, dismissals, and claims of nepotism.

Resolution in one such dispute was sought from the Kurdish scholar Abū Bakr Effendi. As Effendi followed a different Islamic legal school of thought to that of the majority of

Cape Muslims his decision-making drew him into the fray. Effendi adhered to the Ḥanafī School and Cape Muslims to the Shāfiʿī School of thought. The result was a doctrinal and community split between Shāfiʿī and Ḥanafī adherents that exacerbated internal dissent in the Muslim community. Similar inter-communal dissent and prejudice occurred later in the 19th century between the Indian and Cape Muslim communities and again in the 1980's between Shīʿī and Sunni Muslims in the Cape.³⁶

A community conflict-resolution mechanism employed to deal with disputes on the role and status of the Imam was the *bechara*. *Bechara* is an Indonesian term meaning 'conference' or 'debate'. These were public forums held at mosques where Imams presented their opposing views and the congregation could comment and decide on matters under discussion. The *bechara* helped to defuse certain situations. In others it ended inconclusively when brawls erupted between opposing congregates. Tayob (1995b: 52) aptly describes the latter situation as "a premature death for Islamic democracy of the most literal, even though anarchic variety". In many cases, the most articulate Imam with the majority of followers was also assured of winning the day.

With the intense and endless conflict and later perceptions that congregates were not intellectually adequate to decide on matters of Islamic import, it was decided to form an organisation to resolve such issues. The MJC was formed in 1945 and became the

³⁶ See Esack, F. *Mosques: The battle for control - Some Reflections* for an account of more recent mosque disputes in the Cape. < <http://uk.geocities.com/faridesack/femosques.html> > Accessed: 4 July 2002.

representative body of Imams and the Muslim community, as explained in an MJC document on its initial formation:

The establishment of such an organisation was necessary to unite the Leaders (The '*ulamā*' Fraternity) of the Muslims and the Muslim community. During this time there was a lot of infighting, fracas and religious differences and debates ('picharas') amongst the Muslims. The level of debates and differences reached the point of personality clashes and differing on issues, depending on which school of thought one adhered... Hence, the formation of the MJC to foster a spirit of goodwill and unity amongst Muslim.³⁷

In this action, however rested the consolidation of leadership at an organisational level, with a subsequent exclusion of Muslim public participation in matters that affected the community. Conflict resolution in which the community had played a part, albeit a chaotic part, was now located with the '*ulamā*' as representatives of the community. In the process, the potential of the community for active and evolving participation in issues that affected their lives was negated and the lived experiences of the Muslim community denied.

Today, this is a context that both informs and impedes Islamic counselling by the '*ulamā*' in South Africa. An understanding of how the community relates to their circumstances and how they would prefer to participate in and deal with concerns in the community and in relation to South African society is lacking.

³⁷ Undated MJC document obtained from the organisation. Title - Muslim Judicial Council (Cape).

2.6 Muslim political organisation and the Liberation Struggle in the 20th century

At the turn of the century, organised Muslim political participation was increasingly apparent, which reflected concerted, albeit moderate efforts to challenge the system. In 1902 the African Political Party, later known as the African Peoples Party (APO) was formed. The organisation mobilised to address the concerns of the '*Coloured*' community and enjoyed the support of the Muslim community. This support increased, when in 1906 a Muslim, Dr Abdurahman, became the president of the organisation. Dr Abdurahman also served as a city councillor in 1904 and a member of the Cape Provincial Council in 1915.

The main objective of the APO was to secure voting rights for the '*Coloured*' community and integrate the Muslim and '*Coloured*' elite into white society. Its leader, Dr Abdurahman, believed in a qualified non-racial vote and that socio-economic progress was attainable through education. He made notable contributions to education and provided for council housing in Cape Town (Bo-kaap), but his political views made him an unpopular figure especially with radical sectors of the community.

In 1903, the South Africa Moslem Association was established to promote the religious and socio-political interests of the Muslim people. This effort was brief and it failed due to a lack of support from the religious leaders whom it criticised as ignorant and responsible for the problems of the community. At the time Muslims were also

predominantly aligned to the APO and the organisation was not able to sway Muslim support in their favour (Davids 1981; Esack 1997).

A similar organisation was the Cape Malay Association (CMA), established in 1923, and that collaborated with the State. The organisation formed primarily due to discontent with the APO who did not specifically focus on the Muslim community. It proved popular with the Muslim community hereby expanding rapidly. The leader of the CMA, Arshad Gamiet, supported the National Party and contested Dr Abdurahman's position in municipal elections.

Davids notes that it was also the first time in the Cape Muslim community that women were included with men to debate socio-political issues. This led the secretary of the conservative Moslem Women's Association to express her concern and 'fear for the future' (1981: 207). The CPA colluded with the Nationalist party on the promise of preferential treatment for Muslims that in the end did not materialise. A later change in its political stance saw the organisation go from support for the regime to non-collaboration by the time of its cessation in 1945.

Increased radical resistance to apartheid South Africa eclipsed the above efforts. Organisations like the National Liberation League and the Non-European Unity Movement (in which Zainunissa Abdurahman (Cissy Gool) and Waradia Abdurahman, the daughters of Dr Abdurahman, were instrumental) played leading roles. The most important contribution of these organisations was their policy of non-collaboration and

continual mass action. Esack (1997) notes that the ANC later adopted this approach in 1948, which informed the liberation movement's political stance to the transition.

While Muslims were instrumental in these organisations, Islam was not a focal point of their intervention. At the time, a need was felt for an Islamic response to Apartheid. Esack explains that missionary attacks on Muslims and forced land removals of sectors of the community led to the emergence of a Muslim identity and a concomitant demand for an organised Islamic response to the struggle. The MJC document - Muslim Judicial Council (Cape) - reflects on the forced removals of Muslims. It states:

The disruption caused by the Group Areas Act removed Muslims from their mosques. The forced removal to townships exposed Muslims to various evils. Muslims were alienated from their historical culture when the community spirit was disrupted and uprooted.

The response to these circumstances took the form of the Cape Muslim Youth Movement (est.1957) and the Claremont Muslim Youth Association (est.1958). The two organisations were influential in setting up the later Cape Islamic Federation in 1962. A manifesto, the Call of Islam, signed by religious organisations and individuals that opposed Apartheid and Group Areas legislation was another important initiative of the time (Tayob 1999).

This organisational resistance ended in the 1960's when the struggle experienced a general lull. This was due to heightened and severe state repression at this time, including the life imprisonment of Nelson Mandela and other leaders, which undermined the

liberation struggle. The most outstanding example of an Imam resisting the state during this time was Imam Haron an ardent anti-Apartheid activist. The Imam was killed in detention in 1969 and to the Muslim community today is a symbol of the community's contribution to the liberation struggle.

From the 1970's onwards, spurred by Black consciousness, the Iranian Revolution, the international Islamist Movement and local realities of the need for collective action against Apartheid, a new wave of resistance emerged in the Muslim community. The most important Muslim organisations set up during this time were the Muslim Youth Movement (MYM est. 1970), the Muslim Students Association (MSA est. 1974), the Call of Islam (COI est. 1984) and Qibla (est. 1980).

These organisations took up different positions in their opposition to Apartheid and made significant strides in advancing a Muslim communal contribution to the anti-Apartheid struggle. Their action translated into, among other things, campaigns to create awareness of the injustices of Apartheid, mobilising mass action, encouraging integrated action with non-Muslim sectors of the liberation movement, and moves towards greater inclusion of women in their activities (Tayob 1995a: 27).

This intervention was amplified in 1984 with the introduction of a Tri-cameral Parliament, when the state unsuccessfully tried to co-opt Indian and 'Coloured' people into parliament to split the opposition. This resistance continued to the transition and, besides the Call of Islam, these organisations remain operational.

2.7 The '*ulamā*' and Muslim Political Organisations in the Liberation Struggle.

In Islam, no clergy exists. The '*ulamā*', however, constitute a group of male scholars who mediate juristic and theological traditions of Islam and function in such an ecclesiastical capacity. They are recognised for conservatism and according to Moosa (1989:74), stand accused of abdicating their duties to set polity and society right. Moosa notes that a separation between rulers and '*ulamā*' has always existed and besides isolated cases in Islamic history, the '*ulamā*' have generally not been directly involved in politics.

In the early South African Muslim communities individual Imams led the community and formed a loose network of theologians who conducted the socio-religious affairs of the community. Their organisation into groups saw the emergence of the '*ulamā*' bodies in South Africa. Four major '*ulamā*' bodies now represent different Muslim communities in the country. These are the Muslim Judicial Council in the Cape, The Jamiatul '*ulamā*' Transvaal, The Jamiatul '*ulamā*' of Natal and the Sunni Jamiatul '*ulamā*'. The judiciaries of the Majlis Al-shura al Islami and the Majlisul '*ulamā*' of the Eastern Cape as well as the Islamic Council of South Africa are smaller similar bodies that exist in South Africa (Moosa: 1995; Esack: 1991).

In Apartheid South Africa the '*ulamā*' were essentially conservative and indifferent to mainstream politics. Davids (1981:208), for example, describes the MJC as ultra-conservative at its inception and an organisation feared for its power of ostracism. He

does not elaborate on the nature of this ostracism although Esack's observation of the MJC's dismissal of Muslim youth anti-apartheid activism in the 1960's as 'youthful impetuosity' is indicative hereof (1981:475). The MJC also later acknowledged its conservatism and omission in its submission to the TRC, noting that it could and should have done more to challenge the Apartheid regime.

In an analysis of this conservatism and its implication for the Muslim community, Tayob states that the approach is based on a selective *ḥadīth* understanding of the concept of *fitnah* or civil strife. While Qur'ānically *fitnah* is expressed in varied ways, the preferred interpretation by the '*ulamā*' is a *ḥadīth* in Al-Bukhārī that urges a passive, acquiescent attitude to injustice and immorality. Here, active participation in society in times of political turmoil is discouraged. Instead, loyalty to the symbol of the Islamic community (*ummah*) is urged; injustice is condemned but not significantly addressed and individual acts of piety are encouraged as a basis for salvation. This view justifies non-involvement and the writer notes its implication:

It replaces community-orientated service in Islam with individualist forms of worship. The society is abandoned completely and substituted with the salvation of the individual. But the symbol of the Islamic community (*ummah*) is kept alive, even if it is a shell emptied of its justice and morality. It is the singular individual who has to learn to quietly endure, worship and wait for his/her reward after the end of time (1989:71).

Such conservatism was the basis of indifference and omission by the '*ulamā*' in South Africa. The state went unchallenged and was accommodated. Muslims at political

organisational levels that threatened their roles as leaders of the community were vehemently judged and criticised. Moosa (1989:79) observes this dynamic in an analysis of comments by 'ulamā bodies about Muslim political activism in Apartheid society. He cites a comment directed at Muslim anti-apartheid activists from a newsletter *Majlis* (Voice of Islam) that is worth noting here again:

Under guidance and instructions of Mushrik (polytheist) priests and godless communists; mingling with Kuffaar men and women in gatherings where the *nafs* (passions) find free scope to assert all its baneful domination; dancing hand in hand with the Kuffaar, bible wielding priests.

Moosa asserts that the discourse resists change and expresses fear of the disruption of the existing socio-moral order, in particular 'Shari' and parental authority. The 'ulamā' then embarked on a moral crusade to blame political activists for a breakdown in family and religious morality. According to Moosa, "unbelievers" and women, who are reduced to objects of sexual desire, express a fear that the pure character of Islam will be tarnished. Mernissi (1993a, 1993b) asserts that women are also perceived as a threat to male control and authority, which make women a target of scorn and exclusion. Those who then threaten the order and authority of the 'ulamā' are judged, demonised, and in the case of women, sexualised and excluded.

Tayob and Moosa identify two manifestations of 'ulamā' conservatism, the one passive and accommodating, the other judgmental and dismissive. Its approach is indifferent and instils apathy, while its mode of communication is punitive. It advances a practice of

Islam that discourages tolerance, change and creativity and instead judges, threatens, victimises and excludes. In this way, it models values of Apartheid society. In South Africa the conservatism of the '*ulamā*' then accommodated Apartheid and reinforced its values.

Muslim political opposition to the '*ulamā*' responded in a similar manner. Esack, for example, in his submission to the TRC, comments on the Muslim community and the '*ulamā*' in Apartheid South Africa. He describes the community as complacent and feeble in their response to Apartheid circumstances, and the theology of accommodation by religious leadership as betrayal. He affirms the role of Muslim political organisations like the MYM, Qibla and the Call of Islam in mobilising against Apartheid and states:

We succeeded in shutting up and marginalising in public the leadership of our communities. We succeeded in embarrassing them and never succeeded in getting them on board. Internally in the community, in the religious circles we remained the marginalised, we remained the mavericks...the time that people like myself are on the margins, was yesterday, not today (1997:112).

This form of interaction between the '*ulamā*' and political opposition detracts from wider societal issues and appropriate intervention. Social interaction is located in political rivalry and leadership affirmation with the resultant omission of communal participation. In this context Tayob's earlier assertion of the '*ulamā*' abandoning the society is apt.

In the South African Muslim community, the '*ulamā*' developed parallel to Muslim political organisations. Muslim political organisations emerged from the community and from within the ranks of the '*ulamā*'. Many leaders of Muslim political organisations were '*ulamā*' who opposed their environments to progress from this conservative setting to engage an active approach to mobilise against Apartheid. The Call of Islam, for example, emerged from the MJC. It aligned to the MYM but parted from this organisation to start the Call of Islam under pressure from the MYM to choose between them and the mainstream anti-Apartheid movement, the United Democratic Front (Esack 1988: 490).

In their interaction political organisations and the '*ulamā*' challenged each other to affirm their authority as the representatives of the Muslim community. This bound them to an intra-political process in Apartheid South Africa, which was a focus to contest and consolidate power. Islam in turn was the basis to ensure support in the Muslim community. Challenges from the Call of Islam to the MYM and vice versa, as well as challenges of both organisations to the '*ulamā*', and the '*ulamā*' in turn challenging all else were therefore common. Political involvement did then inform the role of the '*ulamā*' in South Africa. However, it was not primarily expressed as challenges to the state as it was socio-religious and political development within the community.

The struggle of the Muslim community in colonial and Apartheid South Africa was then also a struggle of leadership in the community. The '*ulamā*' and Muslim political organisations developed as political entities within the Muslim community. In their

interaction to each other, they functioned as a political unit within the larger political system. With each asserting their contribution or challenging the other to consolidate leadership, this interaction reflected a tradition of dissent in the Muslim community from the beginning of the first mosque dispute in 1836.

From the point of view of Islamic counselling service provision, the political focus of the Imam, '*ulamā*' and Muslim political organisations affected the Muslim community. This is especially the case for the '*ulamā*', who are the largest service providers of Islamic counselling in South Africa. An in-depth understanding of Muslim communal issues together with effective leadership and vision to strategize for change is lacking. The role of the Imam as Islamic counsellor, a position traditionally assumed based on socio-religious status rather than professional counselling skill and capacity, exacerbates the situation. Current Islamic social and counselling intervention to encourage Muslim communal change consistent with post-Apartheid nation-building and social reconstruction in South Africa remains limited therefore.

2.8 Summary

This chapter examined the position of the Muslim community in Colonial and Apartheid South Africa. It assessed how Muslims as a diverse population were subjected to the oppression of these systems, the extent to which there was collusion with the regime, and contributions made to the liberation struggle. With this, it explored political and religious

participation in the Muslim community and the use of Islam as a means to mediate this participation.

In colonial and Apartheid South Africa, social oppression and discrimination marginalised Muslims and affected their communal wellbeing. Muslims were oppressed as a slave community, and subjected to social, religious, and racial prejudice and stereotyping. At the same time, Muslims colluded with the ruling regime of the time. Religio-cultural activities were the basis of communal interaction in the colonial period and important in providing sanctuary to those subjected to the colonial milieu. The position of Muslims in colonial South Africa was thus ambiguous but essentially as subjects of the system.

In the Apartheid era, similar discrimination was directed at the Muslim community. Missionary activities that sought to undermine the practice of Islam, and the forced removals of Muslim communities to township areas characterised by high levels of deprivation, were examples of such discrimination identified in this text. Muslim political organisations emerged to challenge the Apartheid regime and contributed to the liberation struggle. The complacency and conservatism of religious leaders, however, hampered these efforts. Intra-political rivalry between the organisations and the '*ulamā*' ensued that reflected a trend of communal interaction located at leadership levels.

In the early Muslim community, the leadership of the Imam was central to communal interaction. The Imam was a charismatic figure who embodied religious authority with

power vested in him by the community. The elevated socio-religious and economic status of Imams placed them in roles that created communal division and distinctions between ordinary Muslims and the Imam. The rise of '*ulamā*' structures in the community consolidated this position with a concomitant exclusion of the community in societal issues, as highlighted by the *bechara*.

It is in Islamic counselling service provision by the '*ulamā*' where the impact of these factors is most profound. Muslims were subjected to colonial and Apartheid oppression with resultant communal problems and social disintegration. These circumstances require decisive Islamic counselling intervention in the context of nation-building in South Africa. However, a tradition of '*ulamā*' conservatism and intra-political rivalry coalesces in Islamic counselling. The result is intervention that shows limited insight of communal concerns and the community's experience thereof, as well as an inability to apply Islamic counselling to effectively impact on the lives of clients and on post-Apartheid social reconstruction. The lack of leadership, vision and skill to implement Islamic counselling to facilitate nation-building requires alternative interventions and these are explored in the next chapters.

CHAPTER 3

A Theoretical Framework for Islamic Counselling

Models of Islamic Counselling Theory and Practice

3.1 Introduction

Colonialism and Apartheid created severe social circumstances in South Africa that actualised in a legacy of violence in the country. The previous chapter examined the position of Muslims in this societal context. The impact of violence on the Muslim community is apparent when exploring current Islamic counselling service provision. Violence is a common feature of client problems and undermines the social fabric of the community. This in turn provokes a proliferation of individual, social and communal problems that threaten to entrench and sustain a culture of ongoing violence in the community.

From the perspective of Islamic counselling service provision, a number of factors impede effective intervention. Chapter 2 identified as major concerns the oversight of communal issues and client experiences thereof, as well as an inability by the '*ulamā*' as the main Islamic counselling service providers to effect appropriate intervention. In mainstream counselling, present forms of intervention likewise influence the ability to

deal with these problems. Mainstream methods focus on individual development, are not clients-based, and are limited due to a lack of focus on Islamic religio-cultural concerns.

This chapter reflects on Islamic counselling as a counselling paradigm to guide intervention that is consistent with circumstances in the Muslim community. Various models of Islamic counselling exist that are compatible with mainstream counselling and constitute a useful resource to guide Islamic counselling practice. These models are, however, not formulated into a coherent theoretical framework. The lack of a theoretical framework of Islamic counselling impedes effective Islamic social intervention. In the absence of a theoretical framework, practitioners implement Islamic counselling arbitrarily, often in situations that create further problems in the counselling encounter. A participant in the focus group comments:

There is a real need for professionalism out there because I think a lot of time our Muslim clients we really get the short end of the stick. The *shaykhs* are stuck with that problem. They can handle it from a *sharī‘ah* point of view but from a social point of view or a counselling skills point of view they don’t really know how to handle the person.

An integrated Islamic counselling theoretical framework can therefore benefit social intervention and be valuable in guiding Islamic counselling. This chapter formulates a theoretical framework of Islamic counselling based on four models viz. a Medical model, a Qur’ānic model that is also the basis of the Sufi model of Islamic counselling, a religio-cultural model, and a *sharī‘ah* model.

The models of Islamic counselling are client-based, as they constitute appropriate forms of multicultural counselling that are consistent with the needs of clients in the Muslim community. However, like mainstream counselling methods, Islamic counselling models focus on individual development. A lack of a social focus of each model limits its capacity to facilitate reconstruction in the Muslim community as part of nation-building in South Africa. This chapter overviews this nature of Islamic counselling and its limitations in nation-building and offer a basis to explore an alternative role for Islamic counselling in nation-building initiatives. An exposition on each model follows and although distinct, given that all emphasise central tenets of Islam, they are interrelated in the overall discussion of Islamic counselling.

3.2 The medical model of Islamic counselling: A historical overview

The medical model of Islamic counselling is located in the area of mental health and wellbeing. The model provides important historical guidelines on Islamic counselling as it explores the incidence and treatment of mental health in the Islamic medical tradition for indications of counselling and psychotherapy. In modern medicine, this Islamic counselling paradigm is in accord with Psychiatry, a field of medical specialisation that emerged in Europe from the 18th century onwards and referred to in England at the time as mad-doctoring (Routh 1998).

The earliest indicators of counselling from the medical perspective in the Islamic world dates back to Pharaonic times, where clinical observations of symptoms consistent with

modern day mental health conditions are identified in medical papyri. These are found in the Kahun Papyrus (1900BC), Eber Papyrus (1600 BC), Edwin Smith papyrus (1600BC), Heart Papyrus (undated), Berlin Medical papyrus (1250BC) and the London Medical Papyrus (1350BC). ‘Temple sleep’ or sleep treatment based on the nature and content of dreams is a psychotherapeutic method identified at the time (Okasha 1999: 918).

Later such inquiry in the Islamic world is found mainly in 8th -10th century (CE) Islamic medical texts. A pioneering work on mental health, which provides pertinent information on the start of the professional practice of Islamic counselling, is by Michael Dols (1992). In his seminal work, *Majnun: The Madman in Medieval Islamic Society*, Dols explores the historical development of mental health and its treatment in the Islamic world. The writer shows how Islamic medicine and mental health treatment is rooted in the second century medical works of the Greek physician, Galen. The Arabic term for Greek medicine is *ṭibb yunāni*.³⁸

The basic paradigm of Galenic medicine is humoral theory. Humoral theory was associated with early Greek natural philosophy and used by Hippocratic doctors to develop an overarching medical worldview. According to this model, the natural constituents of air, earth, fire and water were important elements of the human body. These elements were thought to correspond with the four humors viz. blood, black bile, yellow bile and phlegm that were produced in different parts of the body. Later

³⁸ *Ṭibb yunāni* is often used alongside traditional Prophetic Medicine known as *al-ṭibb al-nabawī* both still familiar and in use in Muslim communities today. For a modern-day Islamic treatment process based on humoral therapy see Swartz, M.J. (1997). For humoral therapy integrating traditional prophetic medicine, see Horikoshi, H. (1980).

associations emerged between the humors and life stages, as well as human temperaments, seasons and climatic qualities of cold, hot, dry, and moist.

In this medical framework, illness occurred due to humoral imbalance or associated imbalances due to a combination of the above components. This would result in an excess or deficiency of a certain humour in the body, which would point to a particular medical condition. Mental health, for example, pointed to an excess of black bile in the body. In fact, Routh (1998) notes that the literal meaning of the term ‘melancholy’ in the Greek language is black bile. To attain a sense of wellbeing doctors had to manipulate the humors through its qualities to restore equilibrium and thus a state of health.

According to Dols (1992), the Galenic model was translated from Greek to Syriac from the 4th century onwards. Subsequent extensive translation occurred of the Syriac text into Arabic in the 8th century and thus Galenic medicine became the basic medical paradigm of Islamic physicians of the time. The translated works and its continual reformulation combined with the clinical experience of Islamic physicians. The result was a veritable Islamic medical tradition in the 10th and 11th centuries that culminated in the encyclopaedic work of Ibn sīnā (Avicenna d.1037) *Qānūn fī al-ṭibb* (Canon of Medicine).

Significant contributions to Islamic medicine by physicians who wrote renowned medical treatises preceded Ibn sīnā ’s works. These include the works of Abū Bakr Muḥammad ibn Zakariyā al-Rāzī (d. 925) who wrote *Kitāb al-hāwī* (Comprehensive book on Medicine) and *Kitāb al-Mansūr* (Book for al-Mansūr) which were translated into Latin as

Continens and Liber Almansoris respectively. His work *Kitāb al-Tajārib* (Casebook) is also the largest and oldest known collection of case histories of Islamic medical literature. These medical treatises are part of an extensive collection of al-Rāzī's literary works of about two hundred titles on various subjects (Alvarez-Millan 2000: 294).

Other important treatises of the time was by 'Alī ibn al-Abbas al-Majūsī (d. 982-95) who wrote *Kitāb al-Malakī* also known as *Kāmil al-ṣinā al-ṭibbīya*, which was translated into Latin on two different occasions as *Liber Pantegni* and *Liber Regius*. Ishāq ibn 'Imrān (d.908) wrote *Maqāla fī'l-malikhūliya*, the most popular treatise on melancholia in Islamic medicine (Dols 1992:62,70). Another influential work was by Abū al-Qāsim al-Zahrawī. Al-Zahrawī's work was an encyclopaedia of thirty books composed at Cordoba around 1000, known in English as *The arrangement of medical knowledge for one who is not able to compile a Book for himself* (Savage-Smith 2000:309).³⁹

The above texts were part of a widespread pattern in the Islamic medical tradition of the study, reformulation and expansion of Galenic medicine into an Islamic medical tradition that was interchangeably used by Islamic and European physicians and universities. These volumes were part of a corpus of medical writings of its genre, with the aforementioned texts the more influential of the time. The dynamic interchange of knowledge occurred also because, as Alvarez-Millan notes, besides Galen's clinical

³⁹ Alvarez-Millan and Savage-Smith dispute the consistency between theory and practice of these physicians (Ishāq ibn 'Imrān not cited). They question the reliability of their literary works - especially on surgery as based on actual practice - and aver that their knowledge was in certain instances limited to theory. See Alvarez-Millan, C. (2000) and Savage-Smith, E. (2000).

accounts, no case histories from Europe had survived until the 13th century when the Latin medical tradition of *consilia* developed.

Dols (1992: 45; 113) notes that the Islamic medical tradition developed alongside the establishment of the Islamic hospital (*Bimaristan* or *Maristan*), with the first hospital set up in Baghdad in the early 9th century by Yaḥyā ibn Barmāk the vizier of Hārūn al-Rashīd. A subsequent tradition of Islamic hospital construction developed across the Muslim world. Hospitals included special wards for mental health patients and according to Dols marked the novel creation of institutional care for the mentally ill.

It is in this Islamic medical tradition, particularly as relates the study, aetiology, and treatment of mental illness, that basic tenets of Islamic counselling and psychotherapy are discerned. As a process of psychological intervention, this practice was at a rudimentary level. Emotional and psychological states were acknowledged as causal factors in mental health and various counselling methods, some of which are familiar to modern-day psychological counselling, were used to treat patients. These counselling methods however did not model conventional counselling and psychotherapy in the form of verbal articulation and dialogue between a counsellor and client. Dols observes that psychotherapy in its modern form of 'talk therapy' did not exist at the time, neither was there a theoretical framework for its practice.

The treatment methods that point to counselling and psychotherapy were relaxation, the use of music, dance, story-telling and theatre in treatment and dispersing flowers as

olfactory therapy. Physicians also devised and implemented new therapies based on instilling emotional states in attempts to heal physical illness. These treatment methods included using suggestion or inciting anger in patients and arousing fear, shock and shame to address mental health conditions. In general, scholars identify shock and shame therapies as original inventions of Islamic medicine (Rahman 1989, Husain 1998).

Examples of these forms of therapy include that of a deluded patient who believed he was a cow and needed to be slaughtered and cooked in a stew. He stopped eating placing his life in danger. Ibn sīnā approached him with a knife as if to slaughter him, examined him, and indicated that he was too thin for the procedure. The patient started eating again to become fat for slaughter and recovered in the process. A similar case is of al-Rāzī yielding a knife to shock a governor out of rheumatoid-related paralysis, who out of rage and fear was healed when he jumped up to protect himself. Al-Rāzī himself had to run away and explain his 'innovative' new method to the governor from a distance. Similarly, in a case of a female patient with paralysis of the arm, a physician rushed to her in the presence of others as if to lift her skirt. Fearing shame, she raised her arm to protect herself and was cured (Al-Issa 2000:60-62).

The novelty of these approaches appears to have been the specific emotions it applied or incited in the healing process rather than its method. Al-Issa cites a similar method employed by Galen and based on an underlying principle of suggestion. Here the patient believed he had swallowed a snake that caused severe stomach pain. He was given an

emetic, his eyes were bandaged and a snake similar to what he described was put before him. He was cured after getting sick and believing that he had spewed out the snake.

Al-Issa (2000:46) draws on this information as signifying the start of psychotherapy in the Islamic medical tradition. He notes that al-Rāzī was the first physician in Islamic medicine to use the term 'psychotherapy' as *al-ʿilāj al-naḥsānī*. This was also the term al-Rāzī used to explain his psychological method to the governor, in the above-mentioned case. Al-Issa explains that al-Rāzī emphasised the importance of the doctor always suggesting good health and encouraging patients based on the principle that changes in the soul would facilitate changes in the body. In addition, al-Rāzī used cognitive behavioural methods to treat a form of melancholia by combining treatment with advising patients to participate in enjoyable activities.

By using such methods, al-Issa contends that Muslim physicians departed from humoral theory to argue progressively for the psychological interpretation and treatment of disease. Dols (1992:158) identifies this development in Islamic medicine as well. He notes that because of a concentration of psychotic patients in the hospital, Islamic physicians began to question Galenic views to move towards psychological interpretations of mental health. He indicates though that this emphasis was minimal, given the predominant Galenic tradition of the medical treatment of mental illness. Emotional and psychological states were linked as causal factors in mental wellbeing, but the main treatment approach remained humoral therapy, as emotional states were linked

to the humors and treated accordingly. The main working model remained, therefore, the medical approach to mental health.

This was also a time of physiological emphasis on mental health. Dols (1992:26) notes that mental health conditions, especially melancholia, which received much attention in medical treatises, was initially related to divinity or genius. However, as he states, “the divine talent of the poet, lover, mystic or prophet was reduced to a melancholic temperament”. Afflicted persons progressively lost their aura of divinity in the medieval medical tradition, which was reinterpreted as delusions and hence a treatable medical condition.

Al-Issa (2000:67) confirms a scientific tradition in the medieval Islamic medicine. He notes that Muslim scholars developed secular institutions and practised a rational system of medicine without religious interference. Certain medical practices like the use of alcohol and music in treatment were therefore accepted, although incompatible with Islamic principles. The Islamic medical approach did intersect with Islamic counselling as a religious-based discipline. The latter was located in Prophetic medicine (*al-ṭibb al-nabawī*), a parallel development to the medical tradition based on hadīth compilations, that maintained a religio-spiritual focus to wellbeing (Rahman 1982).

Despite its medical focus, both Dols and Al-Issa observe that the medieval Islamic medical tradition held greater flexibility and consideration in dealing with mental health

patients and afflictions, and allowed a wider scope for seemingly unusual behaviours to be tolerated. Persons who challenged the bounds of sanity and insanity like the Wise Fool (the pious eccentric person), the Romantic Fool (afflicted by passionate love, as in the case of Qays [Majnūn] in the Arabic classic *Majnūn Laylā*) and the Holy Fool (in search of a religious ideal) were thus embraced by the society.

Dols indicates that it was only in cases of severe mental illness, where a person was at risk of hurting him/herself or others that s/he was confined to the hospital. Close contact with the outside world was encouraged and the patient was primarily the responsibility of the family. As he states, “he madman was accommodated by society, so that he was not a pariah, an outcast, or a scapegoat” (1992:14). Variance in understanding mental health symptoms in different societal and religio-cultural contexts still exists today. Al-Issa (2000:66) cites a study in which vignettes of a paranoid psychotic and simple schizophrenic was classed as mental illness by ten percent of Turkish villagers and fifteen percent of an urban sample. In contrast, in a Canadian town, recognition of these conditions as mental illness was sixty-nine and seventy percent respectively.

Another historical focal point for professional Islamic counselling is found in the 10th century Iraqi text, the *Rasā'il Ikhwān al-ṣafā wa khillān al-wafā'* (Treatises of the Brothers Purity). Principles of modern mainstream counselling that are rooted in early 20th century vocational counselling and accredited to Frank Parsons is identified in this work. These scholars reformulated knowledge of the sciences as well, and vocational psychology is included in their treatises (Abdullah 1998). Al-Issa (2000:59) indicates that

this text also confirms the use of psychological treatment methods in the Islamic tradition where it suggests the use of music to relieve pain, reduce violence and heal various illnesses.

Based on the information of the medieval Islamic medical tradition, Islamic counselling is identifiable as a long-standing practice. This historical precedent, however, did not embrace contemporary methods of insight and verbal oriented individual and groups therapy. However, the medical emphasis on wellbeing may have led to oversight of psychological treatment methods making it a discipline of lesser study. Dols (1992:159) identifies determining factors in the de-emphasis on psychological methods as an inability to talk to the severely mentally ill, the immediate success of powerful drugs and physical restraint of violent patients.

3.2.1 The medical model of Islamic counselling: Contemporary issues

In the contemporary design of Islamic counselling from a medical perspective, a central issue related to mental wellbeing in Muslim societies is somatisation. Recent studies of counselling in Muslim communities highlight the preponderance of clients to express psychological distress and emotional states like depressive and anxiety disorders, hysterical neurosis, and mood and adjustment disorders through somatisation. Clients present with medically unexplainable or physical symptoms in the absence of an organic base (El-Assra 1990; Rufai, Sabosy, Bener and Abuzeid: 1999, Bazzoui 1970, El-Islam 1975; 2000).

El-Assra (1990:211) notes that in Saudi Arabia clients complain of tightness and oppression. Clients experience feelings of unhappiness and fear as constriction and tightness in the chest. The condition is predominant amongst women who suffer higher levels of depressive illness in this society. The writer indicates that rapidly changing socio-economic circumstances is an important causal factor. However, for women, problems of marital conflict are primary as opposed to men where separation from family towards independent living is the main causal factor in somatisation.

Bazzoui (1970) likewise notes that Iraqi patients describe depression as oppression in the chest, a need for air, and feeling hemmed in. Other common expressions of distress are backache, headache, and abdominal pain, as shown in a United Arab Emirates study (Rufaie et.al.1999) and symptoms of fatigue and shortness of breath in a client study in Malaysia (Azah and Varma 2000). According to al-Issa (2000:268), a new field of medicine, *Gasterheiterkrankheit*, has been devised in Germany to deal with somatisation in Turkish immigrants who claim to experience physical and emotional problems unknown before migration. He notes that in both Belgium and Germany Muslim immigrants periodically return to Turkey as a way to restore health.

In a study of women in Saudi Arabia, Racy (1980) highlights that somatisation is a coded message that conveys ordinary human concerns and problems in bodily terms and reflects living in a constrained patriarchal environment. Women are valued according to their ability to serve their husband and family and produce sons, often under threat of

abandonment for another wife. With limited education and freedom, they are vulnerable without any avenues to express distress.

In a similar study in Saudi Arabia, West (1989) notes that the expression of anger is frowned upon in the society and somatisation becomes a legitimate medium for communicating and coping with stressful circumstances. El-Islam (1975) likewise asserts that for Qatari women who fail or fear meeting culturally approved roles of marriage and children, a somatic state is a means to deal with this pressure. This elicits sympathetic responses, as opposed to being regarded as social failures. In contrast, Chaleby (1985:56) identifies somatisation in Arab countries related to polygamous marriages where clients describe themselves as a “total wreck” and experience disturbed bodily functioning of the entire body.

Somatisation reflects both a client’s condition and the social circumstances the client lives in. The scholars note a link between somatisation and cultural and social conditions as well as its prevalence amongst clients with less formal education. Clients also find it difficult to verbalise problems in psychological terms or lack the vocabulary to describe their feeling, as Waziri (1973) observes in a study of depressive illness in Afghanistan. Clients therefore talk about their state of being in metaphoric terms, often in reference to the heart as, for example, being cold or dark (Bazzoui 1970; Waziri 1973).

Somatisation illustrates that traditional psychotherapy may not always be immediately suited to a client’s needs, and awareness of its occurrence is important for appropriate

Islamic counselling intervention. Later in the chapter, a treatment case of somatisation based on the Islamic religio-cultural model is overviewed.

The medical model of Islamic counselling provides significant insights into the practice of counselling and psychotherapy in Islamic contexts. A precedent for Islamic counselling exists in medieval Islamic medicine, which was characterised by dynamic interaction within the mainstream medical environment of the time. For contemporary Islamic counselling the model provides important historical guidelines and a theoretical framework for Islamic social intervention. In the context of this thesis, the medical model is limited as a design for social transformation, given an individual focus.

3.3 The Qur'ānic model of Islamic counselling

The Qur'ānic model of Islamic counselling is the standard Islamic counselling model. The paradigm is located foremost in Qur'ānic revelation and its scholarly interpretation, and centres on the Islamic concept of human nature and the purpose of humankind on earth. It is also the basis of the Sufi model of Islamic counselling. Sufism extends the Qur'ānic concept of human nature and purpose into a comprehensive process of personal and spiritual transformation that in contemporary Islamic social intervention is equated with Islamic psychology.

The Qur'ānic model of Islamic counselling consists of a Qur'ānic and a Sufi component. While difference exists between the two approaches, it is marginal and not to the extent

as to constitute separate models. They are however discussed separately below to show each component's respective character. Selected verses from the Qur'ān are included in the overview of the Qur'ānic component to express the tone and mood of the message. The Sufi component illustrates how Sufism interprets these Qur'ānic verses to construct a process of human and spiritual transformation that has led to associations, in Islamic social sciences, of Sufism with counselling. This section examines the nature of this relationship in the discussion below.

3.3.1 The Qur'ānic model of Islamic counselling based on revelation

In Islam, human nature rests on Qur'ānic doctrine that embraces a cosmological framework and a process of human development. Qur'ānically, human nature is rooted in a primordial covenant elicited from humankind to serve God. The covenant rests on an original acceptance of a 'Trust' from God referred to as an *amānah* to be the guardians of the Qur'ān and the earth in this life.

In accepting this trust, humankind is God's vicegerents (*khalīfah*) on earth and has to implement God's Will on earth. The ability to implement God's Will on earth is the measure of all individual deeds and one by which humankind will be judged at the end of time. The task is however complicated by Satan's guile, given his expulsion from paradise after refusing to bow down to human creation in the form of Adam as originally

commanded to do by God (Esposito 1991; Rahman 1980; 1982). This is the cosmological framework of human nature in Islam, which the Qur'ān relays as follows:

We did indeed offer the Trust to the Heavens and the Earth and the Mountains; But they refused to undertake it, Being afraid thereof: But man undertook it; He was indeed unjust and foolish. (33:72)

Behold, they Lord said to the angels: "I will create a vicegerent on earth." They said "Wilt Thou place therein one who will make Mischief therein and shed blood? Whilst we do celebrate Thy praises and glorify Thy Holy (name)?" He said I know what you know not. (2:30)

It is We who created you and gave you shape; Then we bade the angels Bow down to Adam, and they Bowed down; not so Iblis; He refused to be of those Who bow down. (7:11)...He said: "Because thou hast thrown me out of the Way, lo! I will Lie in wait for them on Thy Straight Way (7:16).

The notion of vicegerency informs the purpose of human development in Islam. Human nature consists of two additional components, *fiṭra* and the human psyche. *Fiṭra* refers to a universal instinct of humankind that is predisposed to submission to God.

The concept of *fiṭra* has different scholarly interpretations in Islam but rests on a hadīth that states that all children are born in a state of *fiṭra* but subsequently follow varied religious paths as determined by their parents (Mohammed 1995; 1996). Mohammed, who writes extensively on the topic, describes the concept:

Fitra may be described as a God-given innate state or inclination to believe in God or to worship Him. It can also be translated as “original purity” or “primordial faith”—an ontological state that disposes the individual to the good and the lawful (1995:2).

He expounds on *fiṭra* as a fixed spiritual characteristic of human nature that guide towards God and right action and is the basis of the Islamic concept of original perfection. A fundamental goal of humankind is to ultimately actualise one’s *fiṭra*, which ensures positive spiritual transformation and reconciles a person to his/her primordial faith in God, or *tawhīd*. This goal rests on the assumption that in life, humankind may for various reasons, whether individual or social, deviate or be alienated from his/her *fiṭra* and therefore from the path of God. To conduct oneself in accordance with Divine Will and serve God accordingly requires reconciling with one’s original state of *fiṭra*.

The human psyche, in turn, is composed of the *rūḥ* (spirit or soul), *qalb* (heart), and the *nafs* (self) (Ahmad 1992; Ansari 1992). This is the standard construct of the psyche although the *aql* (intellect) and human free-will are complementary aspects of human functioning included by some scholars in the Islamic notion of the psyche. The *rūḥ* is a Divine essence breathed into humankind at creation. By virtue of embodying this spirit, humankind is hierarchically superior to the rest of creation.

Like *fiṭra*, the *rūḥ* has an intrinsic proclivity for God-consciousness and an additional infinite ability to acquire knowledge. In-depth knowledge of the *rūḥ* itself, however, is limited in humans and known only to God. The Qur’ān narrates the nature of the *rūḥ* as:

“When I have fashioned him (in due proportion) and breathed Into him of My spirit, Fall ye down in obeisance Unto him”(15:29)

They ask thee concerning The Spirit (of inspiration). Say: “The Spirit (cometh) By command of my Lord: Of knowledge it is only a little that is communicated to you, (O men!)” (17:85)

The *qalb* (heart) is the locus of moral judgement, self-knowledge and wisdom. The Qur’ān describes the heart as connected to the functions of the sensory organs and central in influencing human behaviour. Overt behaviour reflects the state of the heart so that if the natural abilities of the heart are blocked, the senses also lose their utility, which hinders spiritual development (Ahmad 1992, Ansari 1992 Haq 1992). The Qur’ān states:

Of the people there are some who say: “We believe in God and the Last day;” But they do not really believe. Fain would they deceive God and those who believe, But they only deceive themselves, and realise it not! In their hearts is a disease; and God has increased their disease (2:8-10): And grievous is the penalty they (incur), because they are false to themselves...Deaf dumb and blind, They will not return (to the path). (2:18).

The third component of the psyche is the *nafs* (self). The *nafs* consists of three levels viz. *al-nafs al-ammārah*, *al-nafs al-lawwāmah* and *al-nafs al-mutma’innah*. According to Rahman (1989:17:112), the *nafs* represent mental states or tendencies of human personality rather than a physical structure. It is, though, a living reality of humankind and not exclusive or separate of the body.

Mohammed (1996:102) outlines the various levels of the *nafs*. *Al-nafs al-ammārah* is the lowest level of the self. It functions on an egoistic level and on base desires and is referred to as the commanding self. It is prone to vice and has a tendency towards satisfying biological and emotional needs. The Qur'ānic verse identified as referring to this level of the *nafs* is:

Nor do I absolve my own self (of blame): the (human) soul is certainly prone to evil, Unless my Lord do bestow His Mercy: but surely My Lord is Oft forgiving, Most Merciful (12:53).

Al-nafs al-lawwāmah is the blaming or reproachful self, which is a developmental stage above the lower *nafs*. It is a quality that instils a sense of conscience, self-awareness and reflection that discourages negative actions and behaviour. Attaining this level of the *nafs* initiates the process of spiritual transformation. The verse identified in the Qur'ān that communicates this level of the *nafs* is:

And I do call to witness the self-reproaching spirit: (Eschew Evil) (75:2).

Al-nafs al-mutma'innah, the satisfied or contented self is the highest level of the *nafs*. It is attained when a person impelled by the *al-nafs al-lawwāmah*, frees him/herself from the lower self, fulfils the *al-nafs al-lawwāmah*, and progresses to achieve the stage of *al-*

nafs al-mutma'innah and hence the highest state of spiritual development. The concept derives from the following The Qur'ānic verse.

To the righteous soul Will be said: "O (thou) soul, in (complete) rest and satisfaction! Come back thou To thy Lord Well-pleased (thyself and well-pleasing Unto Him. Enter thou, then among my Devotees! Yea, enter thou My Heaven! (89:27-30).

The *nafs* then is part of human nature, which holds sublime qualities, but at the same time has a negative quality that can direct humankind away from God. In Islam, the liberation from the lower self to spiritual excellence is one of the most fundamental goals of humankind with the ultimate aim being to actualise one's *fiṭra*. According to Mohammed this allows the *rūḥ* (spirit or soul) to merge with the *qalb* (heart) and the *nafs* (self) and constant God-consciousness (*tawhīd*) is realised.

In sum, the convergence of vicegerency, *fiṭra* and the human psyche with its constituent parts define the Islamic perspective on human nature and the purpose of humankind on earth. The process is complete when these aspects are integrated and an ultimate state of divine unity or *tawhīd* is achieved. Intellect (*aql*), humankind's ability of free-will and divine guidance are all factors that can positively influence the process (Mohammed 1996).

In the Qur'ānic model of Islamic counselling above, the process of counselling and its goals are directed at the *nafs* and its transformation. This requires that a 'client' work towards transforming the lower self of *al-nafs al-ammārah* to attain the level of *al-nafs al-mutma'innah*. The *nafs* is then the focal point on which to concentrate efforts of personal and spiritual development, with effective counselling determined by the client's ability to attain the highest self. In this form, this method of Islamic counselling also centres on the individual. Social circumstances are recognised as influencing behaviour although the process that effects change in the framework of counselling is an individual based approach.

Rahman (1980) delineates a social dimension to the Qur'ānic concept of human nature that is consistent with Islamic counselling as a social endeavour. He argues that vicegerency should translate into efforts to create a just moral societal order guided by Qur'ānic principles of promoting good and forbidding evil. Humankind is required to participate in the development of a society and eradicating it of social ills. Personal and social responsibility is therefore central to one's duty as God's vicegerent on earth.

The writer asserts that such change of the self and society, when combined with a primary focus of serving God, is the basis of creative moral human development. This development advances a state of purity or *taqwa* and is attained when a person become a fully integrated moral being because of his/her efforts in respect of the above. In the context of this thesis, the limitation of this view is its onus on the individual in society to effect change, and a lack of focus on the role of leadership in facilitating such change.

3.3.2 The Qur'ānic model of Islamic counselling based on Sufism

The Qur'ānic model of human nature is the basis of the Sufi model of Islamic counselling. Sufism links directly to this concept and is essentially the expansion of the Qur'ānic theme on human nature into a structured process of human and spiritual development. The nature of the process allows it to be easily associated with counselling. Sufism is not viewed as counselling *per se*. However, the fact that it focuses on transformation of the self and that its practice fundamentally rests on interaction between two persons viz. a *shaykh* and disciple, which is comparable to a therapist/client relationship, makes it identifiable with counselling.

The commonality between Sufism and counselling in the *shaykh*/disciple and therapist/client relationship has resulted in Sufism being readily advanced in modern Islamic social science discourse as the most suitable model for intervention in Muslim societies. Studies advise Sufism or principles thereof as an ideal approach to guide Islamic social intervention. These assertions are often implicit, given the intersection of the Qur'ānic and Sufi components of human nature, so that advancing the Qur'ānic concept embraces Sufism as well. Proponents of this view include scholars like Badri, Jafari and Mohamed.

Ajmal (1987:302), on the other hand, links Sufism directly to psychotherapy, which he refers to as the “Sufi science of the soul”. He notes that the first element in the process of Sufi development is confession and the verbalisation of problems and concerns to a Sufi

master. These concerns are dealt with in interaction with the Sufi master who directs the disciple accordingly to the goal of detachment from the world and to the presence of God. To understand the nature of Sufism as the redesign and practical implementation of the Qur'ānic model of human nature, an overview of Sufism is fitting.

Sufism is the mystical tradition of Islam. The term 'Sufism' derives from the Arabic word *Suf* (wool), which is linked to the woollen garments worn by the first Islamic ascetics to symbolise simplicity, penitence and renunciation of worldliness (Nicholson 1989:4). Schimmel (1975:16) indicates that Sufi's also connect Sufism with the term *ṣafā* (purity) to describe the qualities of an ideal Sufi as pure or *ṣāfi*. The structure and practice of Sufism entails a process of spiritual development towards God with the goal of realising the Oneness of God and ultimate union with God (*tawhīd*). Its goals include the denial of this world and constant reflection on the Qur'ān and Sunnah to ensure spiritual transformation and elevation to union with God.

Sufis trace their origins and teachings to the Qur'ān and Sunnah of the Prophet. According to Danner (1987: 243-244), the Prophet taught principles of esoteric Islam, as manifest in four elements viz. *tawhīd* (Divine unity), *dhikr* (remembrance of God), *bay'āh* (a pact of initiation transmitted in the chain of Sufi Masters and to disciples), and the aesthetic Sunnah, to his companions. This knowledge was passed through succeeding generations of the companions of the Prophet, their followers and scholars, and established in Sufism. Exoteric Islam in the form of the *sharī'ah*, the practice of which is another primary component of Sufism, complements the esoteric dimension of Islam.

While Sufis claim their inspiration from the Prophet, Lings (1981:45) notes that the term 'Sufism' was unknown at the time of the Prophet. He identifies 10th and 11th century quotes by Abū'l-Ḥasan Fushanji, Hujwīrī, and Ibn Khaldūn to show that at the time of the Prophet the reality of mysticism existed but not the term itself. Ling's citation of Fushanji's statement "Today Sufism (*tasawwuf*) is a name without a reality. It was once a reality without a name" describes the situation.

In a socio-political analysis of Sufism, Arberry (1979:32-35) argues that Sufism originated in asceticism which developed in response to materialism, corruption and excessive lifestyles at the time of the caliph Ma'āwiya (661-680AH). Religious people withdrew from the society, sought sanction for their actions from Prophetic examples that valued poverty and abstinence and hence Sufism developed from protest against worldliness to an integrated system of religious practice.

Nurbakhsh (1980:14-15), a former Professor of Psychiatry and leader of the Niamatullahi Sufi order, describes Sufism as a process of the heart directed at knowledge of God that is attained through illumination and contemplation. It is a practical process of transformation rather than one that rests on or is comprehensible by rational enquiry. In fact, Ajmal (1987:295) outlines the process of Sufism as a conscious endeavour to move beyond "thought impulses", especially those at the level of the *nafs*, which impede spiritual development.

Nurbakhsh (1980) notes that the Sufi is one who seeks the path to the Divine through love and devotion for God, to become perfect or 'the Perfected One' (*al-Insān al-kāmil*). Such a person is one who has moved beyond his/her lower self (*al-nafs al-ammārah*), is liberated from the individual ego, and exudes sublime qualities that facilitates unification with God. Mohammed (1996:47) explains the concept of *al-Insān al-kāmil* as the prototype of the 'universal man' of pre-existence, who is a manifestation of Divine light. The Prophet is the spiritual prototype of the 'universal man'. Humankind, in turn, is potentially a microcosm of the 'universal man' by being faithful to *fiṭra* and emulating the Prophet.

According to Nurbakhsh, the prototype of the Perfected One at the human level is 'Alī, the cousin and son-in-law of the Prophet. This reverence is assigned to 'Alī instead of the Prophet as he symbolises a person who undertook a spiritual path under the guidance of the Prophet rather than one to whom perfection was divinely ordained, as with the Prophet. 'Alī therefore provides for the Sufi an ideal of a person to imitate when s/he embarks on a path of spiritual transformation. In general, Sufis trace their origins to the Prophet and his various companions, primarily Abū Bakr and 'Alī. Sufi scholars like Nasr (1980) and Nurbakhsh are keen to point out that 'Alī as the Perfected One is not necessarily indicative of the Shī'ī / Sunni schism, as Shī'ī and Sunni Muslims equally revere 'Alī.

A fundamental feature of the Sufi spiritual process is its *shaykh* / disciple relationship. Stoddart (1985:54-56) notes that the spiritual master or *shaykh* is indispensable to the Sufi system, without whose counsel spiritual realisation cannot be credibly practised. Michon (1987: 271) likewise describe the connection to a *shaykh* as “a condition sine qua non for spiritual success”. Initiation of a *shaykh* into Sufism is based on a chain (*silsila*) of the unbroken transmission of esoteric knowledge that is taken back directly to the Prophet.

For the Sufi disciple, initiation may either be through personal resolve to take up the spiritual path or, as in rare circumstances, as if divinely directed to do so. Such a person is referred to as *mazjub* or ‘attracted’ (Nurbakhsh 1980:19). Generally, initiation into a Sufi order requires that a potential disciple show a desire to serve people, to serve God, and to maintain his/her heart in a communion with a *shaykh* that illustrates his/her desire to serve God. The person can then approach a Sufi order for admission (Michon 1987:270). Jurich (1998:14-15) identifies sub-classifications of mystics in Sufism as introverted, extroverted, monotheistic and ecstatic mystics. He notes that in the *shaykh* /disciple relationship the disciple is expected to show absolute faith in the *shaykh* and implement his/her will as s/he dictates. A *shaykh* also has the choice to accept or decline a potential disciple based on an initial personal assessment of the disciple’s ability and sincerity to traverse the spiritual path.

The Sufi path of spiritual transformation is known as a ‘path’ or *tarīqa*. Nicholson (1989:28) indicates that the Sufi on this path is referred to as a traveller (*sālik*) who

advances through a series of stages (*maqāmāt*) to the goal of ‘union with Reality’ (*fanā fi’l ḥaqq*). Schimmel (1975:4; 16) refers to the combination of the mystical path (*tarīqa*), Islamic law (*sharī‘ah*) and the Truth (*ḥaqīqa*) as the threefold meaning of Sufism. This is the basis of Islamic mysticism, which is symbolically expressed as love of the Absolute. She notes that a mystic guided by Divine Love embarks on a quest to God. The process is characterised by the transformation of the soul through tribulation and painful purification from the lower human qualities to a longing for union with God. Here the mystic bears affliction as a trial to test the purity of his/her soul and the success of this determination ensures its ultimate goal of the Divine Presence.

In a discussion of the *Risāla of al-Qushayrī*, (Epistle to the Sufi’s) Arberry (1979:74), notes that the Sufi process of spiritual realisation requires that the Sufi pass through a series of stations (*makām* / pl. *maqāmāt*) and states (*ḥal* / pl. *aḥwāl*). A ‘station’ is a stage of spiritual attainment acquired through a mystic’s personal effort and a ‘state’ a spiritual feeling instilled by God to attain a spiritual goal. *al-Qushayrī* describes the former as ‘earnings’ and the latter as ‘gifts’ and identifies a Sufi path of spiritual transformation as consisting of a total of forty-five stations and states. The process starts with conversion (*tauba*) and includes the awe of God (*taqwa*), sincerity (*ikhlas*), remembrance of God (*dhikr*), trust in God (*tawakkul*), constant awareness of God (*murāqaba*), firm faith (*yakīn*) and concludes with a yearning to be constantly with God (*shauq*).⁴⁰

⁴⁰ In the research questionnaire of this thesis, qualities based on this Sufi path was listed with qualities of mainstream counselling in a question to assess perceptions of the most important qualities an Islamic counsellor should display in dealing with clients. Chapter 4 overviews these findings.

The number, names and sequence of the Sufi path differ depending on the revered works of different scholars of the past. Reference is often made to seven or forty stages, with the last stage also referred to as ‘annihilation’ (*fanā*). According to Nasr (1972:31-39), the final stage of spiritual attainment symbolises the integration of humankind into a proper centre of being where God exists. The body, mind and spirit is fully integrated and the person becomes whole again as in the original ‘Edenic’ state of the ‘universal man’ (*al-Insān al-kāmil*).

Sufism encourages ritual practices and prayer to facilitate the process of spiritual and human transformation. The most important method in the Sufi spiritual process is *dhikr*, which is an extension of prayer into a rhythmic and continuous invocation.⁴¹ This should ideally combine with appropriate forms of prayer-based meditation, which allow a person to reach his/her desired spiritual goal. Contemporary Islamic intervention also advises these techniques, in particular *dhikr*, for use in Islamic counselling.

The above exposition illustrates how Sufism is the creative interpretation of the Qur’ānic themes of human nature and purpose into a comprehensive practical method of development in accordance with the goals of the Qur’ān. The mystical path of Sufism, has found expression in a corpus of profound Sufi poetry and imagery which depicts the relationship of the mystic to God and the many alluring yet agonising components of spiritual transformation.

⁴¹ For a fascinating account of an actual *dhikr* session and its role in weakening defensive functions to allow for the free expression of emotions and a sense of annihilation, see Geels, A. (1996).

Rūmī (d.1312), Hafiz, Rābi‘a al-‘Adawīyyah (d. 801), ‘Attār and Ibn al-‘Arabī are some of the most influential Sufi poets. Idioms and metaphors of love and intoxication are expressed in poetry to symbolise the Sufi quest of spiritual transformation and Divine love. This poetic symbolism and imagery is a feature of Sufism and Bakhtiar (1976) adds diverse symbolism to the mystic quest by incorporating sciences like calligraphy, numbers, geometric figure, music, dreams and astronomy in her analysis of the process.⁴²

The Sufi model of Islamic counselling is an individual-based model of human and spiritual transformation. As a counselling approach, it is most consistent with mainstream counselling. It models an insight-oriented process based on transformation of the self under the guidance of a qualified person such as the *shaykh*, similar to a therapist / client relationship. For client-based Islamic counselling, however, it has the same limitation of an individual rather than a social framework, which limits its ability to deal systematically with client concerns in their wider societal contexts. Sufi orders are also selective in its admission process, emphasising acceptance of Sufi teachings to ensure admission, which is another factor that limits its viability as a social endeavour of Islamic counselling.

⁴² For a comprehensive analysis by Bakhtiar of Sufism as a theory of personality and counselling see Bakhtiar, L. (1993, 1994a, 1994b).

3.3.3 Islamic Vs Mainstream counselling: The debate of Sufism and Psychoanalysis.

The Qur'ānic model of Islamic counselling is the preferred model of scholars in Islamic social sciences who favour an exclusive Islamic counselling methodology for Muslim clients. These scholars consider mainstream counselling inappropriate for Islamic contexts given its individual focus and particularly its lack of religion and spirituality in intervention which is central to Islam.

Sigmund Freud's psychoanalysis, with its emphasis on a sexual interpretation of human behaviour is particularly viewed as unsuitable for Islamic contexts and an affront to Muslim sensibilities of proper family, social and religious conduct. Its sexual emphasis together with its omission of religion has made psychoanalysis a focus of derision with many scholars of the Islamic social sciences keen to create an academic and practical distance between Islam and psychoanalysis. The fact that similarities between Sufism and psychoanalysis are evident reinforces the debate. The contention of Sufism and psychoanalysis revolves around similarities between the *nafs* and its transformation and the Freudian concept of personality development.

In psychoanalysis, a personality structure exists viz. the id, ego and superego, that is equivalent to the *nafs*. The id is a primordial instinctual energy based on pleasure and unhindered expression. The ego and superego are the rational and moral personality elements respectively, that act to control the functions of the id. Freud (1927:30,79) describes this personality structure:

The ego represents what we call reason and sanity, in contrast to the id which contains the passions;...From the point of view of morality, the control and restriction of instinct, it may be said of the id that it is totally non-moral, of the ego that it strives to be moral, and of the super-ego that it can be hyper-moral and then become as ruthless as only the id can be.

In this personality structure, the ideal is to attain a balance between these personality components in order to limit inner conflict located in the id and ensure effective human functioning. The *nafs* and the Freudian personality structure are thus alike and function in the same manner. Both systems propose a process of human development from a lower to a higher state of being, implemented under the guidance of an expert tutor either as a *shaykh* or therapist.

This correlation between Sufism and psychoanalysis in the concept of personality development is the focus of contentious debates in Islamic intervention. The efficacy of drawing parallels between the two systems is both supported and renounced. Hodgeson (1961:407) maintains a distinction between Sufism and counselling. He notes that Sufi analysis and self-examination is based on analysing the contents of the unconscious mind but that:

The Sufi analysis however must not be confused with several sorts of more or less comparable analysis to be found in modern times. The Sufi was not attempting a general scientific study of personality...he was not primarily concerned with the complex individual personality, but with universal potentialities...Nor was the Sufi even concerned with therapy for ill personalities, despite analogies to modern psychotherapy since Freud...the moral and emotional discipline of the Sufis was primarily intended to develop normal personalities to abnormal levels.

The writer adds that Sufism, instead of a psychological analysis of human development, devised a method to enhance understanding of the psychical states of those who took up the Sufi way. More importantly, it was a way to make sense of the place of humankind in the universe. The starting point of this journey was the Qur'ān which first presented this challenge, with Sufism being a reciprocal response.

Nurbakhsh (1908:40) similarly refutes a relationship between Sufism and psychoanalysis. While acknowledging similarities between the two disciplines, he describes them as superficial:

there is no real similarity of a genuine and profound nature between the two. The aim of psychoanalysis is to treat an abnormal person and bring him to a state of 'normality'; the aim of Sufism is to treat a psychologically normal person and bring him to a state of perfection.

Jurich (1998) challenges the above assertions in a fascinating comparative analysis of Sufism and psychoanalysis. His dissertation clarifies issues of contention between these paradigms and encourages a complementary knowledge base between the disciplines. Jurich uses the epic poem the *Conference of the Birds (Mantiq al-tayr)* of 'Attār, a 12th century Sufi scholar and poet, to depict a *shaykh*/disciple relationship and the Freudian therapist/client relationship to evaluate divergence and similarities between Sufism and psychoanalysis. He isolates a number of similarities between the two systems despite the thousand-year period between the two and their having developed in different contexts.

In the Sufi relationship, the disciple has to surrender unreservedly to the *shaykh*, follow his/her every instruction unquestionably, and show complete love and devotion to the *shaykh*. This is known as *iradat*, and is considered the necessary discipline and etiquette of the Sufi path. Obedience to the *shaykh* is important as he symbolises a perfected person who has completed the Sufi spiritual path and a model of what the disciple is to attain.

Jurich notes that in psychoanalysis, a similar emphasis on love and devotion to the therapist does not exist. However, aspects of these emotions are subsumed under the 'Transference' process and the 'Therapeutic Alliance'. Here the client must show trust in the analysis and the therapeutic relationship, which is guided by the transference phenomenon. Freud (1924) discusses transference as the projection by the client of past friendly or affectionate feelings, and attitudes or fantasies that may be conscious, unconscious, positive or hostile, onto the analyst. These feelings are then analysed and dealt with to effect therapeutic change.

Nurbakhsh disagrees that transference and *iradat* are similar. He argues that transference rests on fulfilling the lower *nafs* while *iradat* is love of another person to escape self-love. Transference is material and temporal and *iradat* spiritual and eternal. Transference is based on a person listening to the words of a narcissistic speaker while *iradat* requires being a listener to learn to worship the Truth. Freud interestingly notes that the narcissist is the one person that cannot be helped in the therapeutic encounter given an inability to transfer emotions beyond him/herself for which change is required. Nurbakhsh's

discussion illustrates the extent to which distance between Islam and psychoanalysis is normally sought.

According to Jurich, the nature of *iradat* and transference relationships has drawn criticism of both Sufism and psychoanalysis as encounters that encourage dependence and leaves a disciple or client open to abuse at the hands of a *shaykh* or therapist. One such criticism is from Masson (1997). Transference has its origins in one of Freud's best-known cases that of his client, Dora (Ida Bauer). In an attack of all psychotherapy, Masson, a psychoanalyst and former project director of the Freud Archives, writes of Freud's inappropriate analyses of transference in the case of Dora. His criticism extends to Jung as a Nazi supporter and Carl Rogers as showing a lack of sensitivity to real-life problems. He identifies a number of case studies of violence and abuse of clients in therapeutic relationships and finds psychotherapy to be beset with problems, arguing for its abolition. He does not offer an alternative to psychotherapy and asserts instead that there is no better therapy than exposing the inadequacies of therapy.⁴³

Despite its potential negative nature, Jurich notes that the *shaykh*/disciple and therapist/client relationships is fundamental to the transformation of the disciple or client and is a prerequisite for each system. He adds that in-built mechanisms exist in both systems, though, to minimise the risk of exploitation of a participant. Both *shaykh* and therapist are expected to have undergone rigorous training to qualify in their respective roles and to be worthy of the trust of the disciple or client. A potential disciple/client may

⁴³ For an alternative account of client /counsellor interaction which addresses transference in an Islamic context and includes guidelines for appropriate intervention, see al-Krenawi, A. & Mass, M. (1994).

also choose a *shaykh*/therapist based on the latter's reputation or perceived notions of what a *shaykh* or therapist should be like. A *shaykh* or therapist likewise selects clients by their own personal criteria and belief of their ability to benefit the client.

Another similarity between Sufism and psychoanalysis is that in both disciplines there is initial internal resistance to the process. In Sufism, this is expressed as excuses to take up the spiritual path. In the *Conference of the Birds*, a number of birds meet to decide if they should go in search of a ruler and then make various excuses to avoid the journey. This narrative informs Jurich's view of resistance in Sufism. In psychoanalysis, internal resistances or ego defences impede the achievement of the client's goals. Sufism relates resistance to the destructive nature of the commanding self (*nafs al ammārah*), while in psychoanalysis it derives from reactions of the id.

To overcome resistance and ensure progress, the control of the *nafs* and the id over the disciple's or client's functioning has to be curtailed. In psychoanalysis, analysing resistance to make unconscious material conscious facilitates the process. In Sufism, the *shaykh* deals with resistance by relaying allegorical stories that reflect his understanding of the disciple's experience. The disciple interprets what is relevant in the allegory to his/her situation, which helps to overcome resistance. In both systems then, the *shaykh*/therapist acts as a mirror to reflect to the disciple or client his/her own inner being. Communication is also indirect and both systems employ symbolic interpretations like dream analysis to deal with resistance.

The interaction between the *shaykh*/disciple and therapist/client is the basis of transformation in Sufism and psychoanalysis. Jurich notes that both systems have a shared goal of increased reality and appreciation of life based on experience rather than intellectual understanding. The transformation of the disciple/client therefore requires that s/he surrender his/her inner being to the *shaykh* or therapist based on love and trust in each respective system. Intellectual analysis alone is incapable of breaking the rigid intrapsychic defence structure of the id or the *nafs*. It is only the experience of learning absolute devotion as in Sufism, and trust in the therapist as in psychoanalysis, that diminishes the *nafs* or id and bring the required change envisaged in each system.

Jurich clarifies the process further. He explains that essentially in psychoanalysis, the transformation of the client rests on making the unconscious conscious, reducing internal conflicts and achieving a new insight of the self and a fulfilling existence. A new appreciation of life is likewise sought in Sufism. Here, though, love and devotion to the *shaykh* in order to overcome internal conflicts and achieve trust for others to the point of surrender of the self, is what constitutes transformation. Progress in each system is also subject to a minimal requirement by the client/disciple that it is s/he that has to change her/his inner self. This translates into an understanding that problems are from within and therefore the disciple/client is responsible for his/her ultimate change. This insight is necessary for progress in both methods which would otherwise offer only temporary respite from problems of daily life.

Jurich notes that theoretically, then, psychoanalysis emphasises increasing thrust in oneself, while Sufism emphasises trust in others. At a practical level psychoanalysis entails removing resistance to change in order to surrender an old self to a new self. In contrast, the practical level of Sufism entails that the passions of the old self be overcome through surrender to the *shaykh*. The ultimate goal is to remove obstacles that obscure reality and to enhance the disciple's capacity to experience union and love with creation. Sufism then emphasises surrender of the self into the hands of an external source. Knowledge of the self is only necessary as far as it allows lessening the control of the *nafs* over existence and motivating the disciple to advance towards a state of selflessness. In contrast, in psychoanalysis the primary focus is on exploring the self and the inner world of the client.

According to Jurich, this constitutes the fundamental difference between the two paradigms. In Sufism, the entire course of the path and especially its final goal of reality is based in the greater context of a view towards God. This is the final stage of progress where love transforms individual desires to a state of oneness with God. In psychoanalysis the goal is also reality. However, the ultimate goal is not a state of unity with God but between various dimensions of the mind. In contrast to psychoanalysis, in Sufism, God, not humankind, is the measure of all things.

Jurich concludes that the fundamental difference between these two disciplines is not in their process or effects but in their understanding of the metaphysical, which relates to their respective cultural environments. He notes that both systems developed within a

certain context to obtain credibility. Sufism developed in relation to Islam and therefore its focus on God and external forces, while psychoanalysis emerged at the time of an emphasis on science, hence its focus on the individual and internal forces. This divergence in approach is also consistent with the western view of independence and self-sufficiency while classical Islamic cultures retain an emphasis on self-sacrifice for the greater good, as for the family and above all God.

Bazzoui's (1970) study of depression and psychotherapy in Iraq is consistent with Jurich's analysis in identifying how clients relate to counselling based on their societal contexts. The writer indicates that the Arab tribal system has a shame-directed moral code and an "other-directed" personality structure as opposed to a guilt-oriented code with introspective values. As a rule, the projection of problems onto the outside world and an attitude of shame rather than conscience as in the West, is the essential moral guide. Fear of breaking the rules or shaming themselves and their family is therefore the deterrent in the community, rather than individual responsibility and guilt feelings.

Jurich's study is a valuable contribution to Islamic counselling that identifies the influence of religious and social contexts on diverse approaches to human nature and transformation. It illustrates how circumstances influence client perception of human transformation especially as relates individual, social and communal interaction. Importantly, in the academic debate on Sufism and psychoanalysis, the study provides a platform for shared scholarly interaction on diverse counselling methodologies. These are

important considerations for Islamic counselling service provision, where different worldviews intersect in counselling processes.

3.4 The religio-cultural model of Islamic counselling

Religio-cultural counselling is part of traditional healing systems that are familiar to a number of communities and have existed as part of their societal structures since their early beginnings. This counselling model is in general controversial, given popular perceptions of traditional or cultural healing as unscientific and inappropriate in modern society. Its use of amulets to ward off evil spirits, trance states, exorcisms, or animal sacrifice rituals makes it particularly prone to scorn and dismissal as quackery. In fact, its practice is illegal in countries like Iraq, Kuwait and Tunisia due to its association with underdevelopment (Al-Issa 2000:104). For the client in turn, religio-cultural diagnosis is aptly expressed in Turkish culture as a dilemma of defining a client as a saint (veli) or insane (deli) (Oztürk 1964:349).

Despite reservations about religio-cultural counselling, its practice is pervasive in Muslim societies. It is often the preferred helping service sought as opposed to mainstream counselling which in many instances is accepted only as a last resort when all else fails. In the public questionnaire of this research, for example, forty of eighty-eight respondents indicated that they would consider a Muslim traditional healer as an option for counselling. In mainstream South African society, there are likewise 200 000 African

traditional healers (compared to 27 000 medical doctors) who are consulted by an estimated eighty percent of the population (Viall: 2001). Contemporary studies on Islamic religio-cultural healing also increasingly identify this form of service provision as a viable counselling option within the spectrum of diverse counselling methods. A number of studies on its practice in the Islamic world illustrate its use. These studies highlight its value in dealing with clients and include advising its combined use with mainstream counselling in cases where such joint intervention would benefit clients.

In religio-cultural counselling systems, universal explanations exist on the cause and treatment of illness. Similarities also exist in the nature of affliction and symptoms experienced by clients. Usually a number of traditional healers function within a religio-cultural healing system with specific healers qualified to treat certain conditions and regarded as a specialist by the affliction s/he treats or the method s/he employs. In this way, religio-cultural healing models mainstream medicine, where specialist practitioners treat various aspects of health and wellbeing, like a psychiatrist or physician that each treat different conditions.

In Islamic religio-cultural counselling, mental health is understood in terms of spirit possession. Spirit possession as an explanation of illness and wellbeing is found in communities from Africa to Asia, the Middle East and the Americas. In Botswana, for example, the *Sangoma* treats spirit possession. In Malaysia it is the *Bomoh*, in Java the *Dukun*, in Kuwait a *Muttawee* or the *Mulla*, in Iraq a *Sayed* and a *Mulla*, and in Algeria

the *Marabout*⁴⁴. In Zimbabwe, the *Shona* traditional healer is the *Nyanga* and amongst Bedouin in the Negev, the Dervish treats the mentally ill. In Turkey, traditional healers include the *Hodja* and *Odjak* and in Indian communities including those in the United Kingdom, it is the *Hakim*. In Bali, the *Balian* is the traditional healer and in Pakistan the *Pir*, some of whom are Sufis are healers.

In South Africa, *amafufunyana* is a form of possession is that Zionist church leaders treat through exorcisms. In the Cape Muslim community, the traditional healer is referred to either as a 'slim' and 'geleerde' man or woman which are Afrikaans language terms that translate as 'clever' and 'learned' respectively. The term '*Hakim*' is also used. A pejorative term is *Doekum*, to refer to a healer as one who engages in negative forms of 'healing' like sorcery and casting spells (Edwards 1984; al-Krenawi & Graham 1996; Kealotswe 1991; Razali 1995; Horikoshi 1980; Kline 1963; Al-Issa & Al-Issa; 1969-70; Al-Issa 2000; Linde 1996; Oztürk 1964; Sembhi & Dein; 1998, Mubsashar 2000; Ewing 1984).

Dols (1992) identifies spirit possession in the Judeo-Christian tradition in the narrative of Saul and David, with Saul afflicted and David playing the lyre to bring relief to his soul.

And Saul's servants said to him, Behold now, an evil spirit from God is tormenting you... 'And whenever the evil spirit from God was upon Saul, David took the lyre and played it with his hands; so Saul was refreshed, and was well. And the evil spirit departed from him (Samuel 16).

⁴⁴ Marabout is the French version of the Arabic term *Murābit* which derives from the root meaning 'to tie', 'bind', 'fasten', 'attach'. A *Murābit* is therefore a person tied or bound to God. See Geertz, C. (1968).

In the Islamic counselling framework, spirit possession is caused by spirits known as *jinn/junūn* (pl.). The Qur'ān verifies the existence of *junūn* and a chapter of the Qur'ān is entitled *jinn*. *Jinn* are described in non-human form, created from fire and although associated with evil, the Qur'ān narrates of *jinn* who became Muslim after hearing the recitation of the Qur'ān. The Qur'ānic chapter *jinn* states:

Say: It has been revealed to me that a company of *jinn* listened (to the Qur'ān). They said we have really heard a wonderful recital. It gives guidance to the Right and we have believed therein. We shall not join (in worship) any (Gods) with our Lord. (72:1-2.)⁴⁵

According to Dols (1992:214), reference to the *jinn* in the Qur'ān was a response to the beliefs of the pagan Meccans and the adversaries of the prophet. He cites Welsch to indicate that the Qur'ānic reference sought to gradually demote the status of the *jinn* from a position of semi-divine creatures to powerless beings as part of the evolution of monotheism in Islam. In the process, evil became embodied in a supernatural but non-divine being of *shaytān*. This Qur'ānic reference to the *jinn*, however, resulted in Muslims maintaining a belief in the *jinn* although it is not an Islamic concept.

The concept of *jinn* endures in Muslim cultures and in Islamic religio-cultural counselling paradigm, *junūn* are likewise viewed as invisible ethereal beings made of fire and vapour.

⁴⁵ See also Qur'ānic chapters 15:27, 55:15 and 46:29-30 for related narratives on *junūn*.

Dols outlines the nature of the *junūn* based on Arab legend. He explains that according to Arab legend the *junūn* originally inhabited the earth but were literally forced underground in a battle with God's angels, hence their occupying natural habitats rooted in the earth, like trees and spring. Some *junūn* later managed to re-conquer parts of the earth and now live in places like deserts and graveyards. They dwell in ruins or deserted places and roam the mountains, fields and impure places. They are grotesque in form and can be part animal and part human.

Junūn usually assume animal forms like dogs and snakes, use animals as a mode of transport, appear at night and can be felt but not seen. They are also believed to have vertical eyes and their feet are always hoofs. In Ethiopia, 'Zar' spirits, which are familiar in the Middle East as well are similarly described as physically beautiful with no toes and a hole in the middle of their palms that cause disease and psychological illness (Torrey 1967). In some cases spirits vary in Muslim cultures, as in Malaysia. A spirit may be a *jinn* or *keramat* (holy shrine) both of which are considered Islamic spirits, while *hantu* is an indigenous Malay spirit that is by nature nefarious (Chen: 1970).

Jinn affliction may be collective in the form of disease and epidemics and individual through spirit possession. In individual possession, which is the more familiar form of affliction, a *jinn* usually takes possession of a person unbeknown to him/her and afflicts the body with whichever symptoms the person experiences. These include a host of medical, psychological and mental health symptoms. *Jinn* possession may be intentional as in the case of a physical strike by the *jinn*, the *jinn* breezing past the person and

entering his/her body, the desire of the *jinn* for a person, and sorcery. It is otherwise accidental as when a person steps on a *jinn*'s dwelling place and awakens its wrath (Dols 1992; Oztürk 1964; Abdullah1998).

Another popular belief of spirit possession in Muslim communities is affliction by the evil eye, known as *ayn*, *nazar* or *nafs*. In this approach, certain people are believed to have an ability to look with an evil eye and afflict mishaps on others. Evil eye affliction may also be inadvertent based on the notion that ill intent may exist unknowingly behind praise and afflict a person who is the focus of this praise. A talisman or verbal utterance of *ma shā'Allah* (God protect him/her) secures protection from malevolent, or inadvertent looks of the evil eye (Oztürk 1964:351).

The explanation for evil eye affliction is that glances of hostility, jealousy and envy are cast at people who are usually more successful and exude a general sense of positive well being, making them vulnerable to evil-eye affliction. The evil eye is often thought to be from those closest to the afflicted person, like relatives or friends or else an enemy who hires a 'sorcerer' to cast a spell on a rival (Oztürk 1964, El-Islam 2000, Al-Subaie & Abdulrazzak 2000, Campion & Bhugra 1998).

Many mainstream practitioners view explanations of wellbeing of this nature cautiously, a sentiment reflected in a comment of a practitioner in the focus group discussion:

When somebody talks about somebody is out to get me...that could be a psychiatrically ill person...Then they refuse to take the proper treatment for it and it just gets worse ... we can get drawn into this person's paranoia, because we don't see other signs of illness, but thinking that people are out to get you constantly, that "my skoonsuster will my marriage opbreek, sy het my ge-doekum" or whatever, (*that my sister-in law wants to break up my marriage, she bewitched me*) That's actually a symptom of a psychiatric illness.

In the evil eye paradigm, children are especially vulnerable to affliction, as are persons in states of transition or transitional crises. Thus, newly circumcised boys, newly-weds, pregnant and menstruating women, travellers, children at puberty and adolescence, those at a stage before and after marriage, and people who experience social or marital hardships are vulnerable (Hoffer 1992; Pfleiderer 1988). In the Negev, where boys are thought more vulnerable to affliction than girls, a boy may be dressed like a girl, given a girl's name and have kohl put on his eyes to dupe the evil eye (Abu Rabia 1983). The concept of the evil eye is also found in Spanish culture and is known as 'Mal De Ojo' (American Psychiatric Association:1994).

Affliction by wind or air (*hawā*) is another form of possession in Arab culture. This form of possession causes intestinal and arthritic ailments and when concentrated in the head mental illness (al-Issa & al-Issa 1969/1970). Mohammed describes *hawā* as the passion of the lower *nafs* (1996:103). The idea of *hawā* resonates with a Xhosa South African healer's account of *umoya* (wind or spirit) coming from the patient's mouth in the healing ceremony and departing from the person (Edwards 1984).

Affliction by wind is popular in Malaysian religio-cultural healing, as is a concept 'loss of *semangat*' or vital inner energy that predisposes a person to spirit possession (Chen 1970, Razali 1995). Similar concepts from other cultures are '*espanto*' in Guatemala, a condition of magical fright that is induced by fear of spirits, and *Susto*, also referred to as '*espanto*', in South American cultures where fright causes 'soul loss'. The soul leaves the body and makes the person vulnerable to illness (American Psychiatric Association 1994: 848)⁴⁶.

In the treatment process of *jinn* possession, the role of the healer is to free the client from the spirit that has afflicted him/her. In a study of religio-cultural healing in the Negev, al-Kenawi & Graham (1999c: 57) identify a list of characteristics a healer should show to qualify as a traditional practitioner. Criteria include, belief in God and the practise as outlined in the Qur'ān and hadīth, following Prophetic treatment methods, knowledge of the spirit world and spirit afflictions, having a sense of goodwill to help afflicted persons, and knowledge of appropriate Qur'ānic verses to apply in treatment.

In the healing process, the aim is to drive the spirit from the client's body and hence return the client to a state of normal functioning. The healer uses a range of techniques to effect treatment. These include prayer, rituals, and sacrifice, invoking the assistance of saints and Qur'ānic recitation. The healer may also blow onto clients whilst reciting prayers or else onto amulets or water for clients to use. As the Qur'ān itself is literally

⁴⁶ See American Psychiatric Association's Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders: DSM-IV (1994) for a full list of culture bound syndromes for consideration in mental health diagnosis.

considered a healing, the use of written verses of the Qur'ān in talismans or in water as an antidote for illness is important in the healing process.

Another healing technique is to engage in dialogue with the spirits and urge them to leave the client's body. In the Negev the term '*Tazeem*' refers to the form of communication with the spirits in their language (al-Krenawi & Graham 1996b: 246). Dialogue with the spirits is direct, although an assistant may act as a mediator between the healer and the client while the healer engages the spirit. An example is of a traditional treatment method in Malaysia known the *Main Puteri* or *Peteri*. The healer (*Tok Puteri*) leads the process, and an assistant, the *Mindok* acts as mediator between the healer and the client (Razali: 1999).

In communication with a spirit, a spirit may be enticed by gifts or food to converse with the healer. Once in this state, the healer exhorts the spirit to leave the afflicted person's body. Incense burning, prayer and physical beatings are of the many methods included in the process to facilitate the procedure. Al-Subaie & Abdulrazzak (2000), writing on religio-cultural healing in Saudi Arabia, notes that the healer may urge a *jinn* to convert to Islam to which they usually comply. In the process they are educated about Islam and asked not to possess the person again.

The authors also identify the use of cautery or *kayy* in Saudi Arabia. Here, iron rods with wooden handles are heated and applied to strategic part of the head to treat *wishrah*, a malformation of skull bones that causes elevations and dents on the head. Dols

(1992:132) avers that the use of cautery and types of branding in Islamic religio-cultural healing are due likely to beliefs that *jinn* were petrified of iron. Hoffer (1992:42) similarly indicates that *jinn* are thought to be vulnerable to salt, incense, candles, tar, and petrol, which would explain the use of these substances in the healing process where it occurs.

The use of beating in treatment is familiar to the use of beating in medieval Islamic medicine. Dols (1992) notes that a common belief of Ibn Sīnā and others physicians of the time was that sense could literally be beaten into the severely insane. A patient might therefore have needed a strike or sharp blow to return his/her reason. This form of 'treatment' was used, however, as a necessary rather than routine measure.

In modern religio-cultural healing, beating a client is to exorcise the *jinn*. A number of scholars observe that beatings are often severe and are increased as the person suffers. Screams of pain are interpreted as the voice of the *jinn* and according to Al-Subaie & Abdulrazzak (2000), often result in increased beating or in some instances strangulation to the point of loss of consciousness which can be fatal.

At a more moderate level, beating is a last resort when a repertoire of methods to exorcise the *jinn* fails. In a traditional healing process, al-Krenawi, Graham & Moaz (1996:18) note that if through prayer and dialogue the spirits refuse to leave a client's body, the dervish is willing to resort to beating it out of the patient. Here the client is struck with a stick on the soles of the feet where it is thought the spirits leaves the body. In a similar

way, in the healing process of the Xhosa South African healer cited earlier, the vigorous massage of legs is advised, as spirits are said to leave the person by the legs (Edwards: 1984). A contrasting technique is by the *Pir* in Pakistan. The *Pir* ties a knot in a woman's hair to prevent the spirit from escaping through the head. He captures the spirit as symbolically represented by strands of hair taken from the client, which is put in a bottle and corked (Ewing 1994).

In some cases, as with the *Zar*, a healer is him/herself possessed by a spirit that resides within him/her, but has learnt to manage and put it to good use in exorcisms (Messing 1959). This is seen in a number of cultural systems and it is common for a healer to enter a trance state or appear as if possessed him/herself to implement the treatment process. The healing process is complete once spirits are exorcised. Follow-up treatment is recommended, which includes wearing amulets or talismans to ward off spirits, maintaining regular prayers and visits to saint's tombs. A client may also be informally connected or integrated onto the traditional healing social network to offer ongoing support to the client.⁴⁷

Islamic religio-cultural counselling is a widespread practice throughout the world. Its healing capacity is however limited to clients who understand their illness within these specific cultural paradigms of illness and wellbeing. Evidence also suggest that this form of treatment works better in treating neurotic disorders as opposed to psychotic

⁴⁷ See Messing, S. (1959) and Tantam, D. (1993) for accounts of an exorcism. For a discussion of visits to a saint's shrine as a healing ritual, see Pfleiderer, B. (1988). See also Crapanzano, V. (1973) for a detailed analysis of spirit possession and treatment in Moroccan Muslim culture.

conditions where it is unlikely to help (Razali: 1999). The following overview of a Malaysian healing ceremony offers an insightful illustration of this method.

Razali (1999) indicates that in Malaysia many psychiatric patients first consult a *bomoh* before consulting a psychiatrist. Clients connect mental illness with the supernatural and spirit possession, and believe therefore that the *bomoh* is more competent to deal with mental conditions. In turn, clients consider the psychiatrist unqualified to deal with afflictions, given perceptions that s/he lacks knowledge of traditional healing systems.

In this case, a housewife was referred to a university psychiatric clinic for paralysis, which she developed after discovering her husband had taken another wife. After several sessions of psychiatric intervention as well as consultations with different traditional healers who diagnosed spirit possession at the behest of the second wife, treatment remained unsuccessful. As a last resort, the client undertook the *Main Puteri* ritual.

In this three-day healing ceremony, the first two nights were engaged in dance and encouragement from family and public participants while the healer recited 'spells' and simultaneously went into occasional trance. On the third night the healer entered a deep trance and communicated with the spirits through the *Mindok* instructing them to leave the women's body. The women in turn expressed her anger about her husband through the *mindok*. The healing process continued to the point where the client went into a trance state herself, started walking, and a cure was effected. In the Malaysian religio-cultural paradigm, the client's *semangat* or vital inner energy was thus restored. Razali contends

that based on the healer's perceived special healing powers, shared cultural beliefs, the healer inducing elevated states similar to post-hypnotic suggestion, and the concern of relatives and friends, the treatment method was effective.

3.4.1 Contemporary views on Islamic religio-cultural counselling

Contemporary writings on the efficacy of Islamic religio-cultural healing as comparable or compatible with ordinary counselling explore this possibility by drawing parallels with mainstream counselling systems. Al-Krenawi, a prolific writer on the topic, together with various co-authors, cover this area of study extensively reflecting on the experiences of the Bedouin people of the Negev in the Middle East.

The authors works are inventive inquiries into merging Islamic religio-cultural intervention with mainstream counselling approaches, based on Social Work experience and the successful integration of the two systems in dealing with a number of clients. Their insights mark the start of the contemporary academic and practical integration of the Islamic religio-cultural model with mainstream counselling.

Al-Krenawi *et al* describe religio-cultural healing in an Arab-Islamic context in the Bedouin community of the Negev. A range of traditional healers exists but the healer that treats mental conditions is the Dervish. Both men and women are Dervishes, although female Dervishes are restricted to working with males from their own tribal communities.

This is due to cultural norms that dictate that women at a certain age be separated from potential mates, after which time treating males from other tribes is allowed.

The motivation for becoming a Dervish is based on a religious desire to implement God's will by alleviating the suffering of those assailed by evil spirits and to encourage those afflicted persons to practice Islam. The process of becoming a Dervish is first through attainment of *Baraka*, i.e. a blessing or gift from God bestowed onto an appropriately pious person which may occur through a vision, dream, or supernatural message to undertake such healing. The gift of *Baraka* is subject to its positive implementation and forfeited if used for evil ends.

Baraka is also what personally protects the healer against possession, especially during exorcisms, where exiting *junūn* scatter in haste from the religious healing milieu which they detest. This is similar to a Zulu Christian exorcism in South Africa, where a client is covered with the healer's robe to impart the healer's wholeness to the client and prevent exiting spirits from spreading to the congregation (Edwards: 1984)

Mental anguish and social isolation commonly precede the experience of receiving *Baraka*. In consultation with a qualified Dervish, the person's condition is assessed and confirmed as *Baraka*, and the Dervish then nurtures the novice's gift to become a qualified healer. Al-Krenawi *et al* compare this interaction to a supervision relationship as found in training programmes in counselling and related disciplines. In many

instances, Dervish initiation is an inherited family gift passed on through generations of a particular family.

The writers' note that in the treatment process, the Dervish acts as a mediator between God and the client and employs treatments based on traditional prophetic medicine (*al-tibb al-nabawī*) as found in the Hadīth compilations. Treatment includes an initial comprehensive assessment of a client's condition, after which it proceeds in the aforementioned manner of driving the spirits from a person's body.

Al-Krenawi and his co-authors identify a number of features of the process that impact positively on healing outcomes. The family is instrumental in the healing process. The healer includes initial interviews with family members to assess a client's condition. As the community perceives problems with reference to the family and the tribe rather than the individual, this positively influences the procedure.

The use of this healing system and its widespread acceptance in the community also makes it easier for clients to consult traditional healers. It reduces fear of the stigma of seeing a psychiatrist which is reduced further through family participation in the healing process. The Dervish is also a respected community person and socially sanctioned as a representative of religion, which increases client and family compliance in treatment.

Other factors that enhance the religio-cultural therapeutic process is that the healer is familiar with the culture, norms and standards of the community and includes familiar

religious, communal, regional and tribal customs in the healing process. Community sanction of a healer also exists, based either on his/her reputation as a healer or through clients who have used such a service and vouch for a healer as trustworthy. This equates with referral methods familiar to mainstream counselling.

Al-Krenawi *et al* indicate that it is for such reasons that clients seek a Dervish for assistance. This is especially so when conventional psychiatric service fails a client or its exclusive use is too limited to address the needs of the client. Clients avoid mainstream counselling services that are perceived as limited in scope and understanding of their particular worldview. In many cases a mainstream mental health worker is then a last resort, given clients' feelings that such counsellors do not understand the dynamics of the traditional paradigm of illness with which clients identify.

Mindful of these circumstances, the writers deal with a number of social issues in the Bedouin community by contrasting their religio-cultural healing practices with mainstream counselling service provision. They provide pertinent information and guidelines for intervention on a range of issues and client experiences. These include polygamy and family dysfunction, divorce among Muslim Arab women, dealing with issues of bereavement amongst Bedouin widows, the role of social work in working with Arab clients, divergence in roles and values between cultural and professional intervention practices, and the Islamic context for Social Work practice. Their research include also the role of Islam and religio-cultural sensitive practices in the treatment of

drug abuse, assessing attitudes and the impact of female circumcision and Social Work intervention in the context of blood vengeance in Bedouin society.

Al-Krenawi (1999a: 4) shows the complementary use of ritual in counselling. In fact, he identifies the therapeutic use of ritual in mainstream counselling, as in dream analysis and in the case of Freud who encouraged a client to visit her sister's grave as part of the grieving process. He advises the use of ritual in counselling and illustrates its efficacy in the case of the *bisha* ritual in the Negev. The *bisha* is a conflict resolution ritual that is conducted in the presence of a group of witnesses in cases of disputes and the allegation of wrongdoing levelled at a client. A healer applies a hot iron ladle to a client's tongue and examines the client's tongue. The ritual determines guilt based on the healer's intervention and assessing whether the client's tongue is harmed. If the client's tongue is unharmed, the client is declared not guilty (al-Krenawi & Graham: 1999a: 166-167).

The writer adds that ritual is appropriate in a cultural context as clients from non-western counselling often find it difficult to relate to talk therapy. Many are not able to articulate abstract emotion at all, leading to reluctance to seek a therapist or to remain in counselling. Introspection associated with mainstream counselling methods may also be unfamiliar to the client.⁴⁸ In contrast, the therapeutic use of ritual is free of stigma, connects more intimately with the values and beliefs of a client, and promotes interaction between the individual and the collective. He cites Rando to note that ritual is a right-brain activity and therefore touches the unconscious faster than verbalisation. This creates

⁴⁸ For similar analyses see Dwairy, M. (1997), Dwairy, M. & Van Sickle, T. (1996) and El-Islam, M.F. (1982).

a mind/body congruence that enhances working with difficult emotions that inhibit change (1999a: 12). Essentially, through a series of systematic studies and research, al-Krenawi *et al* saliently illustrate the value of religious and cultural systems for contemporary Islamic counselling intervention.

The above counselling approach is a standard model of Islamic religio-cultural healing. It has a practical appeal in Muslim communities throughout the world and while cultural variations exist in different countries, a core set of practices consistent with the above are apparent. This form of intervention offers an integrated system of healing and vital insights into the social dynamics of communities which is beneficial to the study of Islamic counselling. It is though an individual-based model, which in respect of this study if separately implemented, is limited to facilitate nation-building

3.4 The *sharī‘ah* model of Islamic counselling

The *sharī‘ah* model of Islamic counselling rests on implementing tenets of Islamic Law (*sharī‘ah*) in the counselling process. This counselling model is the main practice model of religious scholars and although widely used, limited information exists on its nature and practice as a counselling method. The common reference to this form of intervention is ‘mediation’ or ‘arbitration’, and the definition of *sharī‘ah* Islamic counselling is an innovation of this thesis. The nature of problems addressed, and the intensity of the

emotional and psychological wellbeing of clients in *sharī‘ah* intervention, makes it consistent with counselling and informs this definition.

Islamic Law derives from the Qur’ān and Sunnah. Schacht (1969: 393) describes Islamic Law as:

The totality of God’s commands that regulate the life of every Muslim in all its aspects; it comprises on an equal footing ordinances regarding worship and ritual, as well as (in the narrow sense legal rules)...Islamic Law is the most typical manifestation of the Islamic way of life, the core and kernel of Islam itself.

Four schools of Islamic Law exist in Sunni Islam which are named after the scholars who originally articulated each framework. These are the Hanbali, Mālikī, Ḥanafī and Shāfi‘ī schools of Islamic Law. In Shī‘ī Islam, the Jafari school is the main school of Islamic Law. Given these different frameworks, the implementation of Islamic Law varies and is subject to the principles of the legal school of thought a community or individuals follow.

As a legal system that regulates Islamic societal life, Islamic Law functions within a framework where judicial reasoning and judgement rests with a *qāḍī* (judge). The *qāḍī* decides on a spectrum of concerns of Islamic life, within the structure of a *sharī‘ah* court, and implements decisions based on his knowledge and interpretation of Islamic Law and its precepts. Decision-making is further, connected to the social and cultural environment within which a particular *sharī‘ah* court functions as Rosen observes in a study of Islamic Law in Morocco. He notes that “cultural assumptions, molded and

articulated by judicial action, deeply suffuse the content and application of the courts assessment of facts”(1989:28).

As a counselling approach, *sharī ‘ah* counselling similarly rests on applying or giving advice to clients on tenets of Islamic Law in counselling contexts. It follows the aforementioned judicial approach to intervention, and either actually or else conceptually, models the process whereby decision-making on Islamic law is effected in a *sharī ‘ah* court by a *sharī ‘ah* court judge (*qādī*). In *sharī ‘ah* counselling then a judicial framework is transposed onto a counselling setting and consequently, a legal paradigm of advice-giving is applied to a process that is typically defined by concerns of emotional and psychological wellbeing.

Sharī ‘ah counselling centres on constructs of Islamic Family Law that regulate family and social relations. Marriage, polygamy, divorce and inheritance are thus focal points of intervention. Depending on the nature of presenting problems, counsellors advise clients on the latter in accordance with its injunctions as defined by Islamic Law. Given the emphasis on Islamic law, *sharī ‘ah* counselling stress knowledge of Islam over and above counselling skill with the experience of a counsellor in respect of the former an additional benefit. Counsellors evaluate cases, client actions and decisions in relation to Islamic law, as to what constitutes proper conduct, with clients informed and instructed accordingly. As a result, practical details of a case are addressed as a priority, rather than more intense personal and emotional matters that present in the counselling encounter. In *sharī ‘ah*

counselling emotional wellbeing, therefore, is secondary to counsel on the rights and responsibilities of clients in individual, family and social relations.

Syed Hassen and Cederroth (1997) capture the dynamics of *sharī‘ah* Islamic counselling in a unique, documented study of intervention by religious leaders in Malaysia. Their research focuses on case studies of Islamic intervention in two different area offices in Malaysia. The writers analyse their study as conflict and dispute resolution, although their caseload concentrates on issues of family and marital relations which is consonant with counselling. Syed Hassen and Cederroth delineate the process of intervention in categories of consultation, conciliation, mediation, arbitration and adjudication. These are varied levels of intervention that religious practitioners implement based on their level of expertise

The writers clarify the nature of *sharī‘ah* intervention by outlining the process of marriage counselling which is a primary feature of *sharī‘ah* intervention processes. They note that, given the centrality of the family in Islamic society and negative views of divorce, *sharī‘ah* intervention essentially seeks to preserve the family unit and family solidarity. To achieve this, reconciliation between disputing couples is the primary aim of intervention as they state:

Probably the basic intention behind the intervention of the Islamic third party in marital conflicts is to restore the solidarity of the family unit and prevent it from breaking up. It is family solidarity rather than the achievement of individual justice and compensation that is the focus of the sessions...Thus, the achievement of reconciliation is a matter of overriding concern for the officers in the religious office (Pg.103).

The writers indicate that reconciliation is sought even if problems have escalated beyond any point of reconciliation. The fact that a client files a complaint and is present to discuss a matter is often sufficient indication for a religious counsellor, that reconciliation is possible. In the willingness the client expresses to deal with a concern, the counsellor thus infers that reconciliation is achievable.

Syed Hassen and Cederroth explain further that the counsellors see it as crucial to uphold the morality of a couple as a basis to attain reconciliation. Here Islamic moral conduct in marital relations is understood to secure harmonious marital and family interaction. The responsibility of the counsellors in turn is to facilitate the process. This the counsellors do by informing clients of how they are erring in their behaviour and what their conduct should be like in relation to Islamic requirements.

This form of intervention has a distinct gender bias. In an analysis of counsellor/client interaction, the writers identify a tendency by counsellors to favour male clients. In one case study, for example, the counsellor instructs a woman to look after herself, her children and her self-respect and to perform her duties as a wife. This is despite the fact that the husband had abandoned her, the couple has been separated for a year, and in the counselling session, the husband does not want to reconcile with his wife. Nonetheless, the woman is advised to perform her 'duties' as a wife, even in the husband's absence which is considered virtuous behaviour that may well encourage the husband to reconcile with her.

Syed Hassen and Cederroth note that despite its seemingly unfair approach this form of intervention is consistent with *sharī‘ah* stipulations of a proper marriage. They add that the *sharī‘ah* model is divinely inspired and therefore remains unchanged, although society constantly changes in a manner that challenges *sharī‘ah* injunctions, like gender equality and women’s rights do in modern day society. According to the writers, this contrasting context of *sharī‘ah* intervention has a strength and a weakness. The strength of *sharī‘ah* counselling is that it gives fixed guidelines, which if followed, ensures that one’s action is consistent with Islam. However:

It is a weakness when people begin feeling that the laws are outdated and unsuited to the values of the modern society in which they now live. The conflict created within the individual as well as within the society at large is difficult to solve and threatens in the long run to undermine the moral foundation which gives the religion its ultimate credibility (1997: 18).

The *sharī‘ah* model of Islamic counselling is a common approach to Islamic social intervention. In the context of this study, it is also the most contentious. *Sharī‘ah* counselling constitutes a legal framework for decision-making that is applied to counselling contexts which focus on personal wellbeing. This presents an inconsistency in the context and approach of the intervention process, as well as divergence in goals and purpose of the process. This variance in approach and purpose in the counselling encounter, from the onset therefore, impedes effective counselling.

Sharī‘ah Islamic counselling is also a male-centred counselling approach. Religious scholars implement *sharī‘ah* counselling using a preferred interpretation of religious texts by male scholars, which automatically disadvantage women. These factors challenge the value of *sharī‘ah* counselling to effect personal and social transformation in Islamic counselling encounters and service provision. The following chapter explores this nature of the *sharī‘ah* model in the South African context of Islamic counselling.

3.6 Summary

This chapter examined various models of Islamic counselling as a prelude to an analysis of Islamic counselling in South Africa. It introduced four models of Islamic counselling viz. the Medical, Qur’ānic, Religio-cultural and *Sharī‘ah* models which were articulated into a systematic theoretical framework for Islamic counselling. A historical basis for professional Islamic counselling was located in the medical model of Islamic counselling. A religious basis for Islamic counselling was identified in the Qur’ānic concept of human nature and its extension through Sufism, and a cultural basis for Islamic counselling was noted in the Islamic religio-cultural counselling model.

A number of scholars have adopted the Qur’ānic model as an ideal framework for an exclusive Islamic counselling approach which is presented as an alternative to mainstream counselling. The chapter explored the nature of this debate and illustrated the compatibility between Islamic and mainstream systems of intervention. The analysis of

Sufism and psychoanalysis, the religio-cultural model familiar in various communities, and the medical model based on dynamic interaction in different milieus, illustrated this compatibility. As a distinct Islamic legal approach to intervention, the *sharī‘ah* model however, does not share this feature with mainstream counselling.

In assessing these models in the context of Islamic counselling in social reconstruction and nation-building in South Africa, the following is apparent. The theoretical framework of Islamic counselling as outlined in this chapter provides important information that can be utilised in multicultural counselling to better understand Muslim clients and thus enhance effective service provision. As distinct models, however, all four Islamic counselling paradigms maintain an individual focus located in intervention that replicates counsellor/client interaction. Although social participation and interaction are included in the process, in particular in the religio-cultural model, the essential focus is the client. This feature of the Islamic counselling models limits it in terms of nation-building.

As individual paradigms, the four models of Islamic counselling cannot facilitate nation-building as envisaged in this thesis. As part of state-supported multicultural counselling service provision, it can, however, be crucial in nation-building. As a state service, Islamic counselling could enhance awareness amongst service providers of cultural diversity in communities and social intervention. Knowledge of Islamic counselling could be a mechanism to understand clients and their belief systems, and thus guide appropriate service provision consistent with the needs of clients. In this way state-supported Islamic counselling provides a focus for interaction where clients and

counselling practitioners engage in processes of mutual benefit based on knowledge of diverse counselling systems and appropriate service provision.

Since Islamic counselling rests on religio- cultural diversity, it also provides a basis to reconcile South Africans in the framework of the National Question. Appropriate services are brought into public life as a focal point to facilitate tolerance and respect for diversity based on sharing knowledge of diverse intervention systems. If located at broad levels of state social and welfare service provision, where different communities and people interact, Islamic counselling is brought to the forefront of social intervention and reconstruction in the country. In the process, the potential for societal conflict and tension based on difference is minimised. In this way, state-supported Islamic counselling would facilitate democratic and clients-based service provision, which provides an alternative perspective to address the Nation Question in a renewed form and hence nation-building in South Africa.

CHAPTER 4

Islamic Counselling in South Africa

4.1 Introduction

The previous chapters explored various facets of Islamic counselling and Muslim communal life to assess a role for Islamic counselling in nation-building in South Africa. The impact of Apartheid on the Muslim community, the role of religious and political leadership in social intervention, and the design of Islamic counselling as an academic discipline were covered in the debate.

This chapter offer an analysis of Islamic counselling and nation-building from the perspective of the Muslim community based on the questionnaire and survey completed for the research.⁴⁹ Comments from Muslims about their experiences of Islamic counselling or their opinions on the topic provide the main information base for the analysis. The information is analysed in relation to current Islamic counselling services and professional standards of counselling as required in social service provision.

The chapter assesses how the Muslim community relates to Islamic counselling as implemented by the '*ulamā*' and client attitudes about the viability of an integrated Islamic counselling service as part of mainstream welfare service provision. At the same

⁴⁹ See appendixes 1 and 2 for copies of the questionnaire and survey.

time, it explores standards of practice of Islamic counselling and its ability to facilitate nation-building in South Africa. A central assertion of the exposition is that current Islamic counselling services are too limited to encourage social reconstruction in the Muslim community that is consistent with nation-building in South Africa.

Three primary issues of Islamic counselling practice illustrate the point. Islamic counselling services, especially as rendered by the '*ulamā*', is not client-based; it lacks professional counselling standards to enhance effective service provision, and it employs a preferred approach to *sharī 'ah* counselling that is inconsistent with post-apartheid democratic transformation in South Africa. The Muslim community's experiences of Islamic counselling and the appraisal of current Islamic counselling practices completes the assessment of Islamic counselling in nation-building in South Africa as envisaged in this study.

4.2 The Research Questionnaires

To gauge attitudes in the Muslim community about current Islamic counselling practices and its role in nation-building, a public questionnaire was designed for this study. The aim was to distribute the questionnaire and obtain responses from persons who had had experience of Islamic counselling. Participants were asked to comment on current standards of Islamic counselling practices and indicate their views on the role of the state as a potential service provider of Islamic counselling. Based on this information, the

attitudes of the community on Islamic counselling as a wider social initiative and by implication, social reconstruction and nation-building in South Africa, could be assessed.

The questionnaire was implemented to constitute Muslim client input on the research topic. Following an initial pilot study to refine the content of the questionnaire, two hundred and fifty questionnaires were hand-distributed in different areas of Cape Town to Muslim members of the public. The areas covered were Mitchell's Plain, Bo-Kaap, Rylands Estate, Kenilworth and Claremont.

Mitchell's Plain is a township area about thirty kilometres from the Cape Town central area and where a large proportion of people were relocated to under the Apartheid Group Areas legislation, from the 1970's onwards. Bo-Kaap is the area where the first Cape Muslims settled and where a large Muslim community remains. Rylands Estate is one of a number of areas where Indian communities were concentrated under Apartheid Group Areas legislation, and Kenilworth and Claremont are Central Business Districts. These areas cut across a spectrum of Muslim communities from different social, cultural, racial and socio-economic strata, allowing for diverse input into the study. The questionnaire was circulated for comment on three e-mail lists as well.

Eighty-eight people responded to the questionnaire. Most respondents, however, did not have personal experience of Islamic counselling. To obtain an account of attitudes about Islamic counselling based on clients' actual experiences, an additional survey was conducted. This study was concentrated at two Islamic organisations in the Cape and

conducted with clients in the process of utilising the organisation's counselling services. The organisations selected for the study were the Muslim Judicial Council (MJC) and the Islamic Social and Welfare Association (ISWA). The MJC is the largest Islamic social welfare service provider in the Cape and ISWA the only registered Islamic Welfare organisation in the Cape. To implement the research, for a period of one month three mornings a week were spent at the MJC and one morning a week at ISWA. This was in accordance with the caseload ratio of about 1:7 between ISWA and the MJC. The research sample was random, based on completing the survey individually on a voluntary basis, with all respondents present at the organisation at the time of research.

During the course of the research, it became increasingly apparent that the MJC would substantially reflect the position of clients in relation to Islamic Counselling in South Africa. As it is the major Islamic social welfare organisation in the Cape, a majority of Muslim clients visits the MJC as a first option for Islamic counselling. The MJC also represents mainstream Islamic counselling practised in South Africa as based on the *sharī ah* model of Islamic counselling. A focused analysis of Islamic counselling at the MJC was therefore appropriate and would ensure a representative study of clients' attitudes on Islamic counselling. The organisation was then focused on to provide the main data for client comment on Islamic counselling and nation-building in South Africa.

In total, one hundred and ninety two persons responded to the questionnaire and client survey. The research eventually covered fifty-six areas and recorded the highest responses from Mitchell's Plain and its adjoining suburb, Strandfontein. Respondents

were mainly women, except for the Internet responses where more men completed the questionnaire.

The following section outlines the research findings of the survey conducted at the MJC. The MJC survey findings is the primary analysis of this chapter. ISWA research findings are however not excluded and provide important information for contrasting analysis of the MJC survey. An introductory overview of problems in the Muslim community based on the intervention of ISWA and the MJC precedes the analysis. This information offers an insight into the context within which clients seek Islamic counselling intervention and is important to understanding the nature of Islamic counselling service provision in South Africa.

4.3 Data presentation

This section overviews the research findings of the client survey conducted at the MJC. Information of the survey that is central to the analysis of Islamic counselling and nation-building is extracted, discussed, and presented in graph form. Findings of the questionnaire and all fieldwork conducted for the thesis i.e. the focus group discussion, interviews, participation observation exercises and general interaction with clients and counselling service providers provide complementary qualitative data to the analysis.

The information is analysed in the context of the MJC's approach to Islamic counselling. It explores the MJC's *sharī'ah* counselling approach to intervention and contrasts it with common presenting problems at the organisation and the broader South African social context. The presentation of data is in thematic form and concludes with an assessment of the findings of the survey. The following themes are outlined for the analysis:

- Introductory overview of problems in the Muslim community
- Agency Analysis: The Muslim Judicial Council
- A Client profile
- The Islamic counselling process of the MJC
- Client attitudes on Islamic counselling services

4.3.1 Introductory overview of problems in the Muslim community

The following section overviews problems in the Muslim community based on interviews conducted at ISWA and the MJC as well as reports obtained from both organisations. It identifies the broad context within which clients seek Islamic counselling and highlights the basic counselling framework that informs intervention.

ISWA attends to about eighty counselling cases per month, of which an estimated thirty cases are new referrals. About a hundred telephonic enquiries for advice and referrals, which in some instances lead to counselling, are processed monthly. A report obtained from a Social Worker at the organisation indicates that about eighty percent of the

organisations' caseload are cases of marital problems. An estimated ninety percent of these cases are physical, sexual and psychological abuse of women.

The report lists other common presenting problems. These include polygamous marriages and extra-marital affairs, problems of unemployment, finance and accommodation, and the failure or refusal by husbands to support a family. Custody issues, drug and alcohol abuse, gambling, problems with children, the insecurity of women and low self-esteem, and early childhood sexual abuse of either partner for which counselling was not received add to the list of presenting problems.

The organisation notes that problems are increasing. It identifies primary causes of problems as unemployment and financial difficulties, a lack of Islamic education and values, disintegration of the family unit, problems of discipline with children, and poor communication patterns in marriage and family relations. The majority of clients at ISWA are women and men usually only attend counselling when a woman seeks a divorce or in cases where custody arrangements are to be made.

ISWA allocates one hour per counselling session based on an appointment system. The organisation offers a number of additional services to the community, like adult literacy and self help enrichment programmes that clients participate in on a daily basis. Staff includes trained social workers and a social auxiliary worker i.e. a person who has undertaken a one-year accredited counselling course. ISWA offers the course, which was

designed by the organisation and is implemented as one of the organisation's community development projects.

The counselling staff at ISWA are not Islamic counsellors in the sense of religious leaders who are qualified in traditional Islamic sciences. Rather they are social science practitioners who work in an Islamic setting and engage a professional counselling service that merge counselling with an Islamic knowledge base.

As a state funded organisation, ISWA is accountable to the Social Welfare Directorate of the Provincial Social Welfare Department. As such, all ISWA activities, like project proposals, staff qualifications, finance and salary allocation are subject to departmental scrutiny. The organisation maintains its own professional standards as well. A social auxiliary worker, for example, can only counsel clients under direct supervision of a Social Worker. Interaction with clients at ISWA indicated that clients were generally happy with the service offered, which they found professional and helpful.

At the MJC, the focus of intervention is marital counselling. Extramarital affairs rate as the highest presenting problems. In these cases clients experience acrimonious marital relations and therefore would approach the MJC to enquire about or request a *talāq* (divorce) or *fasakh* (a wife's annulment of a marriage). Consistent with Islamic law, at the MJC's both men and women can seek a divorce in a *sharī'ah* court. Only men though can effect a divorce by expressing a verbal *talāq* formula - I repudiate you - to a wife. The *fasakh* is the equivalent process for a woman, based on the principle that a male

religious leader or a *qāḍī* act on behalf of the women to annul a marriage. A woman can though request a *talāq* although this process would rest on attempts to persuade a male spouse to grant such a *talāq* rather than a woman being able to implement the *talāq* herself.

Based on observation of counselling sessions, polygamy is a problem in the counselling encounter and is the focus of intense marital discord. The MJC recognises polygamy as a community problem although in the counselling process it does not constitute a serious concern. An MJC counsellor asserts, for example, that the lack of legal status of Muslim marriages in the Apartheid era led to wide-scale polygamous marriages and the breakdown of family and communal cohesion. Further, although most mosques fall within the MJC's authority, he notes that a lack of knowledge and co-ordination of the activities of Imams at a local level advanced this state of affairs, which is still the case.

In the MJC counselling process, however, polygamy is considered Qur'ānically sanctioned and therefore cannot be denied, as the counsellor notes:

The Qur'ān gives permission for a man to take another wife, so that is why even married life should not be based on emotion...you can't stop people from getting married, I know of a lot of people who has two and three wives, and they all live very happily, if you should only visit Malaysia and those places.

In the Muslim community men then marry and re-marry with a fair amount of ease. In interaction with clients and counselling practitioners, general perceptions exist that the

'*ulamā*' are decidedly complicit in this regard. Sentiments are that the '*ulamā*' themselves engage in polygamous marriages and are therefore reluctant to oppose its practice as doing so would implicate themselves.

In contrast, an ISWA social worker notes the problematic nature of polygamous marriages generally and in relation to religious leaders. She indicates that men marry at different Imams in different areas, creating a range of problems in the process and states:

You sometimes find people get married with one imam and they go to another imam for a second marriage, then the first imam didn't know that he is married- and he can't even maintain the one marriage. He goes to another imam, in another area and actually creating more problems in the community, the wives, the maintenance, the children, goes to another wife having the same problems and the problems just increases, all the time.

One wife that I can remember... her husband got married to a second wife and she ran into the mosque and she went to stop the nikah... and she asked the Imam, "do you know my husband is married, do you know he is not maintaining me and my children properly"... and he said no he didn't know her husband was married... but still he went through with the second marriage.

Extra-marital affairs and polygamous marriages are commonly allied to a range of other problems like violence against women and children, desertion, neglect, and a lack of maintenance. Many cases that present at the MJC therefore are of a multi-problem nature. A study of children in polygamous marriages in the Negev by al-Krenawi, Graham & al-Krenawi (1997:451) observes a similar trend of the multi-problem nature of polygamous marriages. The study explores relations in polygamous marriages that consist of two sub-families, focusing on the functioning and wellbeing of children of the senior wives.

The authors finding reveal that the mothers of the children, as senior wives, suffer a range of somatic complaints as body aches and headaches. They complain of anxiety and tension described in a nervous state referred to as '*assab*' and report hostile relations with junior wives, economic hardship and poor marriage relations. The children, in turn, displayed behavioural problems at home that included disobedience, hyperactivity, repeated lying to a parent and authority person, sibling fighting, enuresis and stuttering. The children's academic achievement in a range of scholastic activities like concentration, school attendance, and peer and teacher interaction was also below average. Family dysfunction between sub-families, inadequate and dysfunctional exposure to the father and a lack of concern and interest on the part of the father for the children were recorded as well.

The authors have substantiated these findings in additional subsequent studies on polygamous family functioning. They highlight increased levels of tension in and between various family units, as well as the higher risk of social, academic and emotional problems among children of polygamous marriages. (al-Krenawi & Lightman: 2000; al-Krenawi & Graham: 1999e; al-Krenawi, & Wiesel-Lev 2000; al-Krenawi: 1999e; al-Krenawi:1998a).

In the Islamic counselling context in South Africa, problems of this nature present in the counselling encounter. The paucity of information on the topic and a denial of such circumstances and its impact make an assessment of the exact nature and intensity of such problems difficult. Nonetheless, the above studies, which significantly highlight the

nature of problems experienced in polygamous marriages, also reflect to an extent the context and problems as manifests in Islamic counselling service provision in the Muslim community in South Africa.

In addition to its marital counselling service, the MJC also deals with related issues like child custody and maintenance as well as cases of Last Wills and Testament documents that it draws up for clients. These issues are also especially contentious in polygamous marriages. A range of other problems present at the MJC that is the basis for seeking a *talāq* or *fasakh*, although not directly related to polygamous marriages. Cases like substance abuse, child sexual abuse including incest and wife battering fall within this category. Here clients would be referred to specialised mainstream agencies for appropriate intervention. The Islamic marital counselling aspect of such cases would though remain a focus of the MJC. Clients seek Islamic counselling in South Africa within this broad context. The following section examines the MJC intervention in dealing with these circumstances.

4.3.2 Agency Analysis: The Muslim Judicial Council

The Muslim Judicial Council is an Islamic non-governmental organisation established in 1945. It is situated in the Western Cape and has one central office for the Province. As noted in Chapter 2, the organisation was initially formed to manage increased conflict in the Muslim community around issues of religious leadership and representation. It has

since evolved to an organisation that represents approximately 120 mosques out of 132 mosques in the Western Cape, including the outer-lying areas of the Province.⁵⁰

Having established itself to the extent that it has, the organisation is recognised as the representative body of the Muslim community and an authority on Islamic religious matters in the Western Cape. This is both in the Muslim community as well as in the broader 'secular' context where different people and organisations consult with the organisation to verify ruling, injunctions, practices, or views on Islam.

The MJC consists of one hundred and twenty members who are mainly 'ulamā' and theologians. MJC documents describe its main objectives in the Muslim community today. The organisation seeks to provide for the overall needs of the Muslim community, which includes the spiritual, educational, moral, cultural, political, economic, and social needs of the community. To this end it arbitrates and decides on matters of Islamic import that affects the Muslim community, particularly in relation to the *sharī'ah*. It liaises with others with shared objectives and aims to promote unity, peace, and stability in the Muslim community. The main services that the organisation provides is Religious Guidance and Consultation, Marriage and Divorce counselling, Islamic courts, Social Welfare, and the administration of *ḥalāl* dietary laws.⁵¹

⁵⁰ Telephonic confirmation of estimate figure as at 19 April 2002.

⁵¹ Undated MJC documents. Titles - Muslim Judicial Council (Cape); Muslim Judicial Council Halaal Trust. See also MJC web page <[http:// www.mjc.org.za](http://www.mjc.org.za)> Accessed: 4 July 2002.

This research focuses on the MJC's Department of Social Welfare, the main service provider of Islamic counselling to the Muslim community. A Social Welfare Department document explains that the department is the main functioning section of the organisation in relation to the Muslim public. It is the locus of interaction between the organisation and the Muslim community who engages the MJC's Islamic social intervention services.⁵²

The Social Welfare Department operates from Mondays to Thursdays, from 8.30am to 13.30pm, for counselling service provision. On Fridays, it is open until 11.30am for administrative purposes. The department consults with up to forty clients per day, with five counsellors available to attend to clients. The intensity of the workload is reflected in statistics of a department report for 2001 which indicates that from January to October 2001, counsellors attended to 3250 appointments. Of this caseload, 357 *talāq* (divorce) and 222 *fasakh* (a wife's annulment of a marriage) decisions were effected.⁵³

The MJC works according to an appointment system. Appointments are scheduled for a particular day and do not include a set time. Even if a set time is scheduled clients have to wait to see a counsellor, which given the caseload, may take all morning or until the office closes for the day. This is an important factor in clients' decisions to access this resource and attend counselling on a regular basis. If clients are employed, arrangements must be made with employers to attend sessions. Clients may miss a day's work, which is

⁵² See the Department's web page: < http://www.mjc.org.za/social%20Welfare/social_main.htm > Accessed: 4 July 2002.

⁵³ MJC - Social Welfare Report November 2001.

a concern for some who, whilst they wait, show signs of stress as they try to see the counsellor and return to work before the morning has passed. In many instances clients are also anxious to see the counsellor, as a number of related appointments are scheduled for the day, like 'secular' court appointments to deal with maintenance or custody issues. If clients visit the MJC without an appointment, efforts are made to attend to the person, otherwise a later appointment is scheduled.

The MJC counselling staff complement consists of five counsellors, three men and two women. A religious leader who has been with the organisation for over twenty years heads the department. Two Imams assist him. One is a senior counsellor who has been with the organisation for over fifteen years. He is also an Islamic Radio Talk Show host on a programme on Islam and the family. The radio exposure has increased his popularity and perceptions of his expertise on Islamic family matters, hence frequent requests by clients at the organisation to consult with him. The senior counsellor is also the main respondent in this research. The other Imam is recently qualified and is located at a mosque in Mitchell's Plain. The women counsellors are a former community worker, who is also married to the religious leader in the Department, and a former MJC volunteer who has completed an ISWA social auxiliary worker's course and is now employed at the organisation.

The qualifications of the counsellors vary from formal qualifications in their religious capacity to community work experience and courses undertaken. The counsellors conduct lectures, courses and workshops on Islam in the community and the Imams are resident

Imams at certain mosques. None, though, hold formal tertiary qualifications in areas of study like Social Work, Psychology, or Counselling that define standards for counselling practice. However, the counsellors share in a range of experiences that is the basis for consulting with and assisting each other to deal with the different cases that present at the MJC. Here the senior counsellors act in a supervisory capacity to the other counsellors.

In terms of the physical setting, the MJC Social Welfare Department is a separate but inter-leading section of a large MJC building that includes departments for its other programme activities, a college, and administrative offices. The counselling offices of the Social Welfare Department each have a small window to allow counsellor/client interaction to be visible to those who pass by. This is to adhere to Islamic rules of male-female interaction and separation of space. Prefabricated walls separate offices and when clients speak in elevated tones during sessions, they can be heard in adjoining offices.

As counselling proceeds during the day, staff passing by may intervene in a counselling session for a friendly greeting to a counsellor, to serve tea, to obtain a signature for a document or forward a telephonic enquiry for a response. The waiting room is an empty space with posters of Islamic-related matters on the walls and benches against the wall for clients to sit on while waiting to see a counsellor. A tape-recording of Qur'ānic recitations occasionally play in the background and the general mood is sombre.

Clients sit quietly, looking tense, and rarely interact with each other. One client explained that she found the environment of clients sitting in the waiting room humiliating. She

described the setting as having to sit like cattle in a row and suggested alternatives that maintain confidentiality and allow clients to maintain a sense of dignity. The current MJC counselling setting is therefore not ideal or consistent with professional counselling standards like confidentiality and heightened regard for the client which are central to effective counselling. These circumstances do though present, in some instances, as unintentional and related to a lack of knowledge by staff of necessary requirements for professional counselling.

Clients attend the MJC on their own initiative or are referred to the organisation by a local Imam. Case referrals are also from social workers, psychiatrists, and mainstream social service providers and welfare organisations. Clients further engage the MJC's services due to the recognition of the organisation as an authority on Islamic matters. Current procedures for seeking a *talāq* (divorce) or *fasakh* (a wife's annulment of a marriage) also mean that in most cases clients inevitably have to pass through the MJC offices. The MJC is the main organisation that issues divorce certificates and is often contacted by outside agencies to verify the authenticity of divorce certificates.

In addition, the MJC offers a service that is both advanced by the organisation and understood by the Muslim public as the systematic implementation of Islamic law as required in Islam. A suitably qualified religious leader with religious authority to effect a *talāq* or *fasakh* implements Islamic Law in a *sharī'ah* court. The process therefore models the legal context of Islamic law where a *qāḍī* gives advice and makes decisions within an acceptable Islamic judicial framework. This enhances perceptions that the MJC

provide an Islamically sanctioned and thus religiously binding service, and therefore accepted as authoritative in the Muslim community. In the case of ISWA, a social worker will counsel a client to the point where all case documentation is finalised, and accompany the person to the MJC to have divorce papers issued. The client will not be expected to go through the MJC counselling process again.

The Islamic counselling model employed at the MJC is *sharī‘ah* counselling. In this respect, the organisation has developed its own unique design of implementing the process. The Social Welfare Department describes the process as:

A formalised procedure, which has developed over the years and has been discovered to be best suited for the difficult conditions, which exist in the Cape Muslim community.⁵⁴

The counselling process follows a set procedure. Usually through a telephonic enquiry, a person requests an appointment to discuss a concern. An appointment is scheduled on a waiting list of about one-month. At the first session, a client is given an opportunity to relate her/his concern. The first visit is essentially an information gathering session with case information recorded and processed onto a file. A date is then set for both parties to appear for a joint counselling session to allow the other party to present his/her side of a stated problem. The other person is informed of the meeting through a standard MJC

⁵⁴ See the Department's web page: < [http://www.mjc.org.za/social %20Welfare/social _main.htm](http://www.mjc.org.za/social%20Welfare/social_main.htm)>
Accessed: 4 July 2002.

letter that is posted to him/her. For purposes of postage, the meeting is scheduled for about two weeks after the initial visit.

At the second session, should both parties attend, the counselling process commences. The counsellor informs the clients of the MJC's procedures and each person is allowed to relate her/his position in relation to the presenting problem. The time allocated to a session depends on the nature of a problem but usually lasts for a minimum of thirty minutes. Joint counselling sessions are repeated four or five times until a problem is resolved. If a person does not attend a session as requested by a first letter, s/he is usually sent two more letters over a period of about two-months to enable her/him to respond. Additional correspondence may ensue, depending on the nature of a case.

According to a Social Welfare Department report, though, persons to whom letters are sent for participation in joint counselling, who in most instances are husbands, usually only respond on the third or final letter and very often not at all. Both *talāq* and *fasakh* at the MJC follow the same procedure, although a lack of response or refusal to attend sessions is a predominant feature of the *fasakh* process. In such instances a man is usually sent five letters and two additional telephone calls are made to elicit a response.⁵⁵

In terms of the MJC procedure, women in the interim attend sessions alone and have to wait for a husband's response for a joint session. If after these attempts, a husband does not respond or refuses to appear for joint counselling, cases are referred to the *sharī 'ah*

⁵⁵ Interview conducted with the senior counselor at the MJC – 26 November 2001. See also department reports and web page.

court for a hearing and decision-making. The senior counsellors hold a joint sitting and finalise the matter at a *sharī‘ah* court hearing, and a *fasakh* is effected in a husband’s absence.

This structured procedure is only circumvented in cases that are assessed to be of such a nature and intensity as to require immediate resolution. The senior counsellors confer and implement immediate decisions accordingly. Based on observation of counselling sessions, such a decision was effected in one instance in a case of incest and another where the counsellor questioned the client’s status as a Muslim. In cases where a husband has abandoned his wife and cannot be located a woman would be required to sign a sworn statement stating her circumstances to ensure a *fasakh*.

The MJC hold *sharī‘ah* court hearings every Thursday. The *sharī‘ah* court itself is not a court structure, as such. Rather, the senior counsellors’ offices double up as a court on a Thursday, with senior counsellors deciding on matters then. In this way, the senior counsellor acts as a *sharī‘ah* court judge (*qāḍī*) at the hearings, although this role is not referred to as such. The *sharī‘ah* court is therefore not so much a structure as it is a concept, and besides some differences in content, like clients taking an oath in matters of *talāq* or *fasakh*, for example, it operates in a similar way to a counselling session.

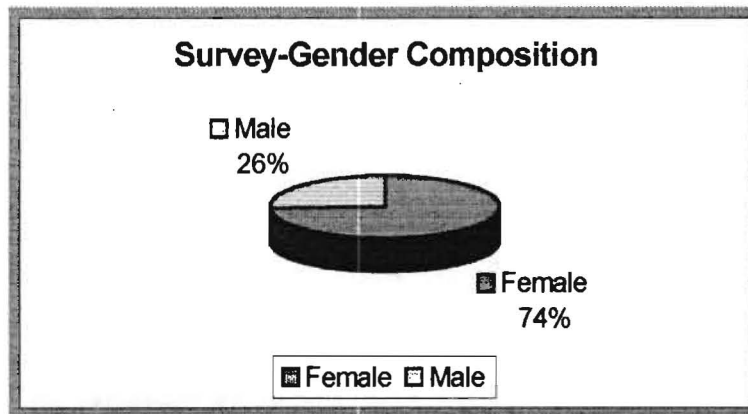
4.3.3 A Client Profile

The following is a profile of clients who attend the MJC and is based on the information of the research survey. The client survey covered thirty-nine areas, with the highest number of responses viz. twenty-three, recorded from Mitchell's Plain. The second highest response rate was from Strandfontein, an area adjacent to Mitchell's Plain.

Sixteen of the thirty-nine areas are identifiable as townships. These are residential areas that different communities were relocated to under forced removals by the Apartheid Group Areas Act. Generally, high levels of crime and violence, a lack of and inaccessibility to resources, unemployment and communal disintegration characterise social circumstances in township areas. These problems reflect the impact of the systematic dispossession of communities through Apartheid legislation and are consistent with the findings of Apartheid human rights violations as relayed in the TRC report.

Most of the other areas listed in the survey are identifiable as 'working class' suburbs with only six areas more affluent suburbs. The majority of clients who attend the MJC are thus from the lower socio-economic strata of society who are generally the most exposed and vulnerable to social problems and deprivation.

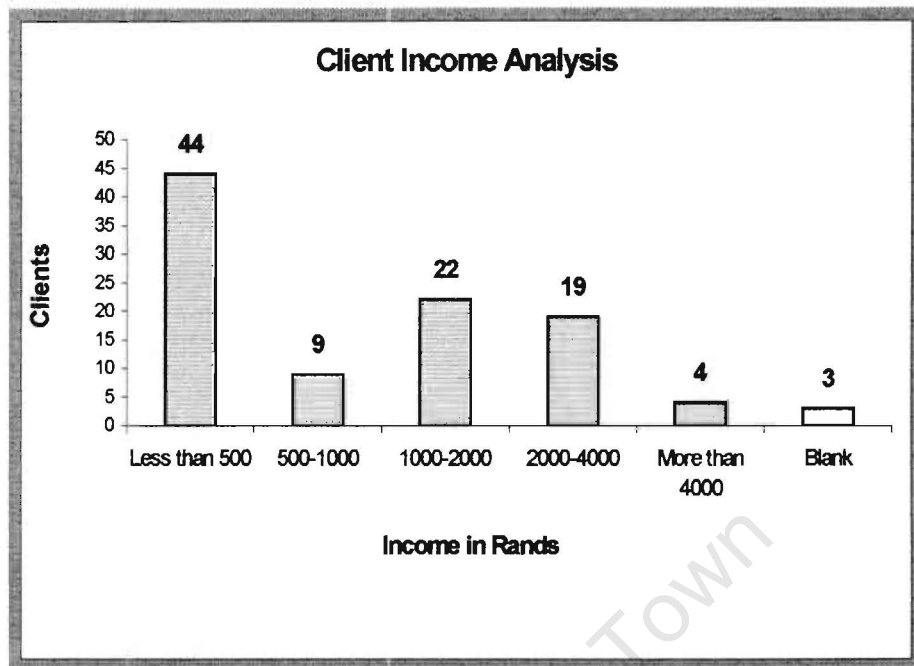
The following outline jointly overview the gender composition, marital status, age, educational levels, and the socio-economic status of clients.



One hundred and one people, the majority of whom were women, completed the client survey at the MJC. Seventy-five women and twenty-six men were recorded. Of the 101 responses, sixty clients were married, nineteen were separated and fourteen divorced. Two clients were single and one widowed. Five 'no-response' were recorded.

Sixty-four clients were within the 31-50 age group; thirty-two were in the 18-30 age group; and five in the over 50 category. No clients were recorded in the under 18 group. Most clients had an education level of Primary or Secondary school. Twelve clients had a primary level education and seventy-three a secondary level education. Sixteen clients had a tertiary level of education, of which twelve had a college or Technicon education and four a University degree or diploma.

The majority of clients earned a monthly household income of less than R4000, which is equivalent to about \$380 or £250 a month as at June 2002. The following graph illustrates this income analysis:



In a gender and economic analysis of the data, forty-two of the forty-four clients who earn less than R500pm are women. Most of the women who earn less than R500 per month are unemployed or else home makers and are financially dependent on a spouse. None of the women had an income exceeding R4000pm. In contrast, two men earned less than R500 per month, four earned between R500-1000, eight earned R1000-2000, seven earned between R2000-4000, and four earn more than R4000 per month. Male clients generally fell within the higher income groups.

Based on the above data, average MJC clients are women in stages of young or middle adulthood with a primary or secondary level of education. Clients are primarily from deprived communities in South Africa, economically dependent on a spouse, and

financially incapacitated. The fact that the majority of clients at the MJC seek assistance for problems of marital discord makes clients who engage the MJC counselling service predominantly women who are emotionally and socio-economically disempowered.

In the counselling encounter, finances are often the cause of intense marital strife. Frequently, men do not support or are reluctant to financially support a family and do so by giving minimal amounts of money. In polygamous marriages, the problems escalate where a husband has different families to support. For women the process of seeking Islamic counselling to effect change in their lives is of necessity delayed until problems are at elevated levels of conflict. Women do not have money to travel distances to the MJC. The MJC's office in the Western Cape is about twenty kilometres away from Mitchell's Plain, where the majority of clients are from. Travelling to the MJC means cutting on a food budget which in certain instances is the same amount as feeding a family for a day.

To attend counselling, clients often have to borrow money from neighbours, friends or family which incurs debt and instils a sense of shame. On one occasion, for example, a group of women shared their experiences in the MJC waiting room and realised that they shared this problem. Most had struggled to get money to be present at the organisation. Debt further incapacitates women financially, who essentially bear the burden of family disintegration and distress with limited resources to deal with such concerns. The result is that problems that require counselling are delayed, until a point of crisis, which is when clients arrive at the MJC seeking intervention. By this time, problems may be so intense

that clients have developed a mental illness. In the month of completing the survey, two women interviewed indicated that they were diagnosed with mental conditions as a result of marital problems and were in the process of receiving psychiatric treatment. In the one case, the client suffered partial paralysis due to continual long-term physical abuse by the husband.

For women in abusive relationships, with no income and economically dependant, it is difficult to leave these relationships. To turn to family presents additional problems of financial and emotional stress. A social worker at ISWA comments on the present nature of the problem in the Muslim community.

We know Islamically, when you get married to a husband everything he provides is yours. The day you get divorced is actually a different story...What is happening now to the wife...he chucks the wife out of the house and she has to go back to her family with the children, irrespective if she has a job or not and this is very problematic for the wife...that the wife go back to her family, its another adaptation for her to adapt to her mother's house circumstances again, for children it's an adaptation and it's very difficult to cope with.

By the time women engage Islamic counselling then, they are often physically and emotionally abused and seek counselling with a view to obtaining an almost immediate divorce. The senior counsellor at the MJC confirmed that clients are traumatised and in a state of crisis when they first arrive at the organisation. Community imams who may represent a more cost-effective option are intermediaries only insofar as they refer clients to the MJC. Moreover the intensity of problems make it unlikely that local Imams who

are not trained as counsellors nor have the power to effect a *talāq* or *fasakh* can assist clients at this point.

With limited resources at a local level, the process of seeking Islamic counselling for women in the Muslim community, essentially adds to the emotional distress and financial and socio-economic disadvantage of women and their families. Current standards of Islamic counselling practice further affects the wellbeing of clients and reinforce their continual personal and social disempowerment. The following section illustrates reflecting on the MJC counselling process.

4.3.4 The Islamic counselling process of the MJC

The MJC focuses on *sharī‘ah* counselling with the central intervention strategy to reconcile couple. Reconciliation is the uppermost aim of counselling to uphold the ideal of the Islamic family unit. Ideal problem resolution, therefore, is reconciliation between disputing couples as it implies that the stability of the family unit is maintained which is central to Islam. Reconciliation is also the measure by which the success of the counselling encounter is assessed. Higher reconciliation rates are thus interpreted as higher counselling success rates.

Notwithstanding the intensity of presenting problems or a client's desire for a *talāq* or *fasakh* then, the counselling process follows the standard MJC procedure outlined earlier. Through a series of written and telephonic correspondence, the participation of a spouse is sought, with the idea to reconcile the couple. This applies to cases where clients have been separated for significant time spans as well, unless a spouse cannot be located. Counselling then proceeds based on principles of the *sharī'ah* in regulating family relations to reconcile a disputing couple.

In the MJC's intervention process, the aim of counsellors to reconcile a couple and uphold the ideal of the Islamic family unit is often at complete variance with the client's level of functioning. When clients first seek Islamic counselling it is usually at a point of crisis having been subjected to sustained marital conflict and abuse. The way in which clients express themselves in initial counselling sessions reflects these circumstances which Syed Hassan and Cederroth (1997:73) capture in describing similar sessions in their Malaysian studies:

Disputants often invoke past grievances, accuse one another and make loud denials. Often, the parties become quite emotional and resort to arguing, shouting, using strong language and even crying. In such cases the third party will try to calm them down by giving advice, asking them to be patient (*sabr*) and in extreme case, reprimanding them for their behaviour.

Rosen (1989:7) similarly observes this interaction in a study of intervention in Moroccan *sharī'ah* courts. He states that when the *qāḍī* commences a case:

His first substantive question is usually the signal for the shouting to begin. Everyone wants to tell his or her side of the story, and no one seems eager to sit quietly while an opponent is speaking. The *qāḍī* nods, listens, questions: the principals sit, stand, shout, and cry... Sometimes the *qāḍī* lets people shout at each other for a little while -whether to let them vent their anger or to gauge the intensity of their feelings-and sometimes he intercedes immediately to move things along.

Rosen's analysis, suggest another dimension of this initial interaction in *sharī 'ah* counselling viz. its potential as an alternative method of conflict resolution that allows for a cathartic expression of emotions. Thus while clients may enter counselling in a state of crisis, the free expression of emotion does in fact allow to deal with problems in a manner equivalent to conventional counselling.

Indeed, at the MJC, clients are likewise overwhelmed when they eventually get to talk about their problems. If a husband is present, as the focus of a client's distress, the point of talking about a problem is of such intensity that clients may aim to strike a husband physically. Based on Rosen's analysis, it can then be assumed that the MJC approach may well have a desired effect in alleviating clients problems. Thus, the initial counselling session, rather than a crisis as described in this text, reflects instead a particular form of communication in Muslim communities.

The South African context, however, is unique. The impact of Apartheid on clients, and on-going violence and abuse of women in the Muslim community, indicates beyond doubt that clients are in a state of crises when they engage the MJC service. Further,

problems have commonly been endured by clients over the long-term with *sabr* (patience) to a point where it is beyond their ability to bear. One ISWA client indicated, for example, that she endured problems from her husband for fourteen years before seeking assistance. Here the concept of *sabr* also reflects '*ulamā*' conservatism in encouraging personal salvation through individual acts of piety, as discussed in Chapter 2. Given South Africa's Apartheid context, the implications hereof are that clients have internalised trauma and political and social disintegration on a personal level over the long-term and have endured this suffering as if religiously obliged to do so.

While vociferous initial Islamic counselling sessions may then allow for the cathartic expression of emotions, the effect would be limited to that particular session. This offers a short-term intervention, which is not sufficient to deal with client problems in South Africa's context. The MJC's approach of reconciliation as a primary method to intervention would then conflict with the client's emotional state. Further, it does not address the client's distress and in fact, urged to reconcile with an abusive husband adds to the client's distress by compelling the client to remain in the abusive situation. This inconsistency in the counselling approach and context, therefore, extends rather than alleviates client problems.

At the MJC, children in a marriage are often a focus to attain the desired reconciliation between disputing couples. Children as a focal point of intervention is a central component of the MJC counselling process and the senior counsellor clarifies his approach in this regard. He explains:

Now I have reconciled a lot of irreconcilable marriages...I am very fond of saying...you people want to give up your marriage and nobody can convince you but answer me this question. I would say to them look, lady you can walk out of here and find another husband, that is not impossible, husband you can walk out of here and find another wife, that is not impossible but for your children to find other parents like you is impossible. I then sway that whole form of counselling focusing onto the children and if they love their children they would put their differences aside.

In the earlier mentioned studies of polygamous marriages by al-Krenawi *et al*, the authors illustrate the use of intervention strategies to draw parental figures into the process of change. The idea is to create awareness amongst the parents of the negative impact of family dysfunction on the children in order to reduce inter and intra-family hostility and enhance the children's wellbeing. The authors deal with the realities of polygamous marriages, with comparative levels of success, in an attempt to manage polygamous family conflict and dysfunction.

In the case of the MJC process, however, the focus on the children to reconcile disputing couples that lacks concomitant on-going professional intervention, risk adverse effects on the children as well by exposing them to ongoing family violence. In a study of domestic violence Guth and Prachter (2000:136) note, for example, that spouse and child abuse frequently coexist. They indicate that even if children are not physically harmed in cases of domestic violence, exposure to and witnessing the violence and abuse has a similar traumatic effect on the children. The trauma is usually at a stage of vulnerability when children learn about trust and social interaction. The consequences are that these children are vulnerable to emotional and development problems; they show higher rates of learning disability and poor school performance and are prone to alcohol and drug abuse

later in life. The children may also accept violence as an appropriate form of conflict resolution and hereby perpetuate patterns of social and family violence.

Another component of Islamic counselling at the MJC is dealing with issues of polygamous marriages. Women often approach the MJC to verify the validity and status of polygamous marriages after discovering that a husband has taken another wife, either without the woman's knowledge or without her consent. One client explained, for example, she was informed of her husband's remarriage whilst running errands, by a friend who coincidentally enquired about this. In dealing with issues of polygamous marriages in counselling, women are informed of the permissibility of polygamy in Islam and that a wife's permission for polygamous marriages is a *Sunnah*. The important point to stress would be how to deal with the situation. These are the parameters presented to the client as a guide by which to make further decisions on a marriage. General advice to women on how to deal with marital problems may include how to attend to her husband's needs, like organising a romantic evening, for example, or making herself more attractive to him.

If a client complains about a husband's refusal to maintain his family, the counsellor will inform the husband of his duty of maintenance according to the *sharī 'ah*. This point is usually highlighted in a manner to emphasise the rights of women in Islam and often as an attempt to reflect concomitant social changes on women's rights and equality. The attempts of the '*ulamā*' to reflect societal change that stress the rights of women in society is though only a slight advance from the past. In cases of violence and abuse

against woman, for example, the counsellor will deride a husband's action as inappropriate. Men who abuse their wives are therefore not tolerated as to make their behaviour seem acceptable. However, violence against women is not sufficiently condemned to effect concrete change. In fact, the lack of focus on violence against women often places clients at risk of continual abuse.

One client informed the researcher, for example, that having just emerged from a counselling session, her husband wanted to assault her outside the MJC building. She called for help from the counsellors, who intervened and advised the couple to make every effort to settle their differences at home. Here, in the counselling intervention, clients have to determine for themselves how to deal with problems.

Hassen and Cederroth (1997) note this trend in their research in Malaysia as well. Counsellors discuss problems, advise clients and make decisions but clients are left to work out for themselves how to follow through on advice. Clients are thus informed of principles of the *sharī'ah* but are not guided beyond this point as to how to deal with problems in a practical manner. Based on one of the survey questions on suitable venues for Islamic counselling, a number of clients suggested, therefore, that Islamic counsellors undertake home visits. This they felt would help counsellors to comprehend the intensity and urgency of their problems and offer appropriate intervention. Related to this were requests for follow up counselling services.

In cases of male clients in the counselling encounter, a husband may relay his side of a story and often in the process, outline what a wife's correct behaviour should like be in terms of his understanding of Islam. Here the client reflects familiar interaction of Muslim patriarchal society, and also imposes his views onto the counselling process rather than takes advice as a client. Comments may be directed at the Imam as a way to seek support for an opinion. It is taken to the extent that a male client may appear to be informing the Imam about Islam, as in saying, for example, "but Imam, according to the *sharī'ah* she is supposed to... is it not true?"

As a private organisation, the MJC functions independently. Should clients feel that the MJC process does not adequately address their needs they can either consult with another agency or seek redress through the 'secular' system of service provision. This is rarely an option for clients as relates marriage counselling, as clients seek to conduct relations in accordance with Islam. The Imam is therefore an ideal person to provide information on what constitutes Islamically acceptable conduct in marital and family relations.

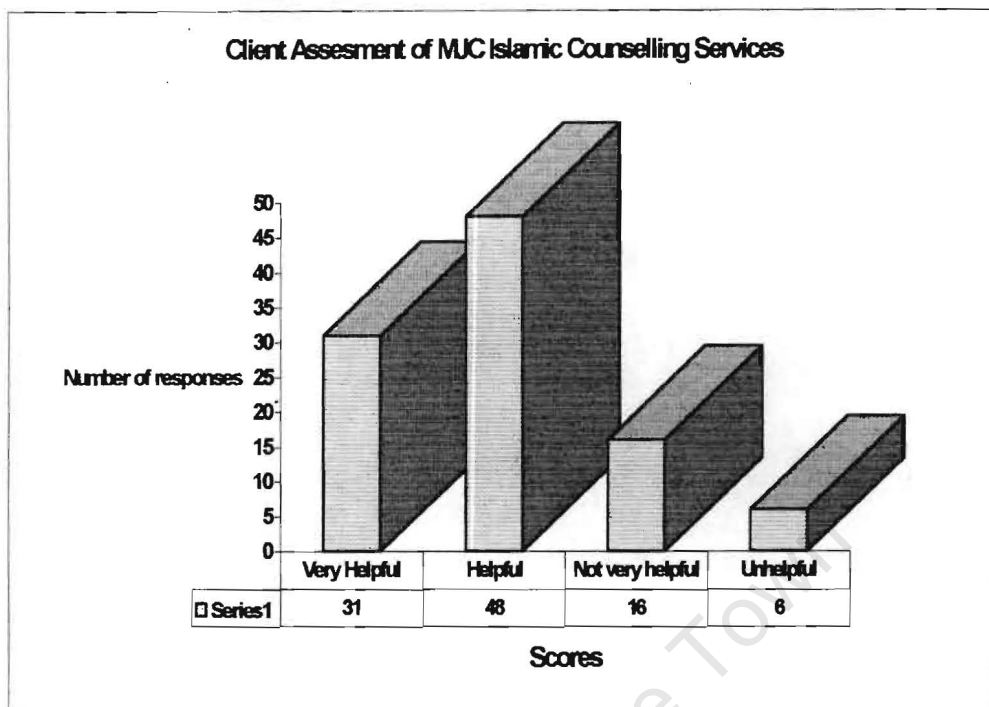
In cases of custody and maintenance, clients would however seek redress through the 'secular' court as this ensures a legally binding decision. Husbands are more likely to comply with maintenance and custody conditions as non-compliance can incur criminal charges. In maintenance and custody cases at the MJC, the counsellor would attempt to work out an agreement with the disputing couple. The counsellor records a written agreement that the couples sign. Clients determine and agree on maintenance amounts and access to children, which is negotiated in the office.

In most instances, such arrangements are not adhered to and women in fact indicate their preference to seek redress through the ‘secular’ courts. In this respect, clients choose from the counselling session what is best suited to their needs, as custody and maintenance cases illustrate. The MJC attempts to implement the *sharī‘ah* and the client circumvents this by seeking redress in secular courts. The inability to appropriately assist clients in turn progressively reduces the role of the MJC as an Islamic counselling service provider to issuing religiously sanctioned divorce certificates.

The above tract outlines the general trend of social intervention at the MJC in the context of a majority of women clients who seek counselling at levels of crises and who are disempowered in various areas of personal and social functioning. The following section overviews the attitudes of clients as recipients of Islamic counselling as well as client opinions on the role of the state as an Islamic counselling service provider.

4.3.5 Client attitudes on Islamic counselling

In the above circumstances, a fundamental concern would be how clients relate to the Islamic counselling encounter. In assessing Islamic counselling at the MJC, clients ironically noted that the service was either very helpful or helpful. These scores were:

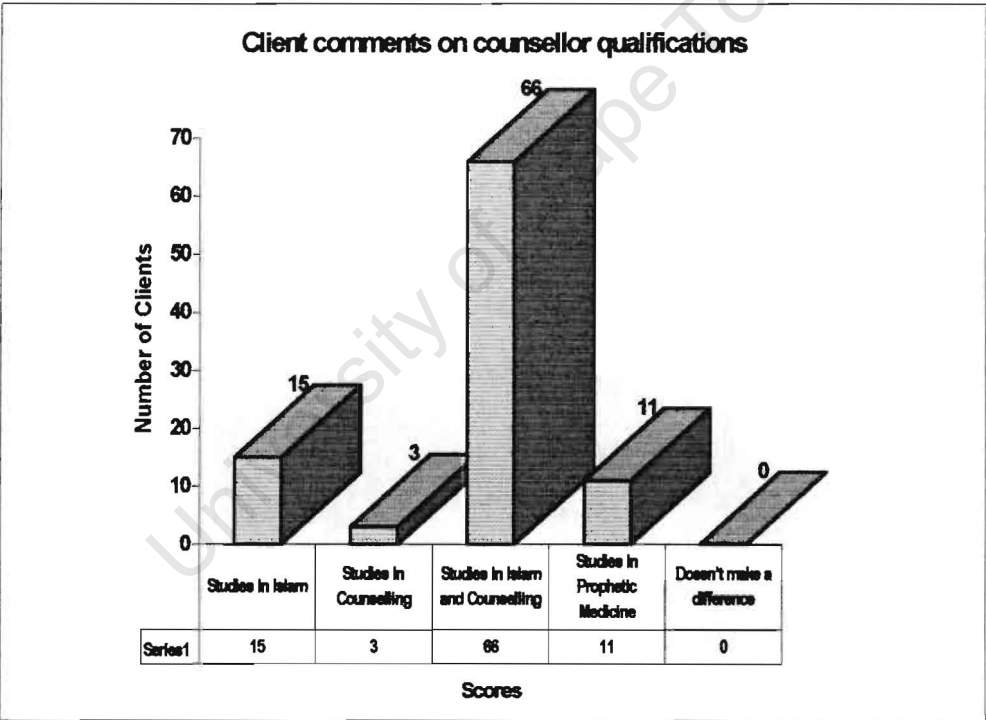


In a follow-up question, seventy-eight clients noted that they would use the same service again. Nine clients indicated they would use a different Islamic counselling service. Five indicated they would use ordinary counselling and nine clients marked the category 'other'. A *shaykh* or Imam was identified as a first choice for Islamic Counselling, followed by an Islamic organisation. Responses were fifty-one and thirty-eight respectively.

The MJC senior counsellor anticipated this result. Throughout the course of the fieldwork he stated that he was pleased that the researcher was doing this work as it would confirm the importance of his role and the MJC as an Islamic counselling service provider. He reminded the researcher that qualifications was not what was important for Islamic counselling and his comment towards the end of the research project captures his point:

This community is a community, for example, for yourself Somaya, you could have 200% more qualifications than what I have. If you sit in this office, and I sit in the next office, and people come here for advice and you ask them ‘there is highly qualified Somaya with a doctorate etc’ and there is Imam...not that I want to praise myself don’t get me wrong, but the community is that, they would want to speak to an Imam.

The client response on counsellor qualifications nevertheless challenges the wholesale acceptance of ‘*ulamā*’ as the ideal Islamic counsellors. The majority of clients noted that to qualify as an Islamic counsellor, the counsellor should ideally be trained in both Islam and counselling. Studies in Islam and counselling rated highest as follows:



A related aspect to counsellor qualifications was respondents’ comments on the qualities that a counsellor should display in dealing with clients. Most clients indicated that counsellors should be fair between couples, understanding, and honest. Generally, a sense

of being professional and supportive was emphasised, with many clients indicating that counsellors should not attempt to reconcile couples against their will. A number of clients noted that a lack of alternative Islamic counselling services or knowledge of such services, and the fact that the MJC offers an Islamic service influenced their decision to approach the organisation.

In the public questionnaire, participants were similarly asked to rate qualities that they felt were essential for an Islamic counsellor to display in intervention. Participants had to select five qualities from a list of fifteen. Values from the Sufi stages of spiritual development discussed in Chapter 3 which are consistent with counselling, and qualities identified in mainstream counselling as central to counselling intervention were listed. The five highest ratings in order of scores were Listening, Confidentiality, Religious Morals, God consciousness and Social awareness. Social Awareness was described in the questionnaire as 'knowledge of society' and 'community involvement'.

A combination of counselling skill, Islamic knowledge and values, and social awareness and involvement, as central to Islamic counselling is thus apparent. Professional standards and confidentiality was in general emphasised by clients who feared that talking about their problems would result in the whole community coming to know about it sooner or later - as a comment in an internet questionnaire noted. 'Too often matters discussed with '*ulamā*' become public knowledge a few days after'.

The fact that clients seek redress in ‘secular’ courts further indicates that ‘*ulamā*’ are not an only option for intervention. In contrast, Muslim clients are responsive to services that are most consistent with their needs. Thus, the MJC are most efficient in advising on Islam and furnishing ‘Islamic’ divorce certificates, and therefore consulted, while ‘secular’ courts have better outcomes in ensuring maintenance and custody and thus preferred to resolve such cases. In this regard while clients accept the ‘*ulamā*’ as Islamic counsellors, they do so with an understanding that services should project effective standards of intervention.

Practitioners in the focus group discussion expressed concerns of professional standards in Islamic counselling as well, especially in the absence of mechanisms to ensure effective Islamic counselling in the Muslim community. Two participant comments note:

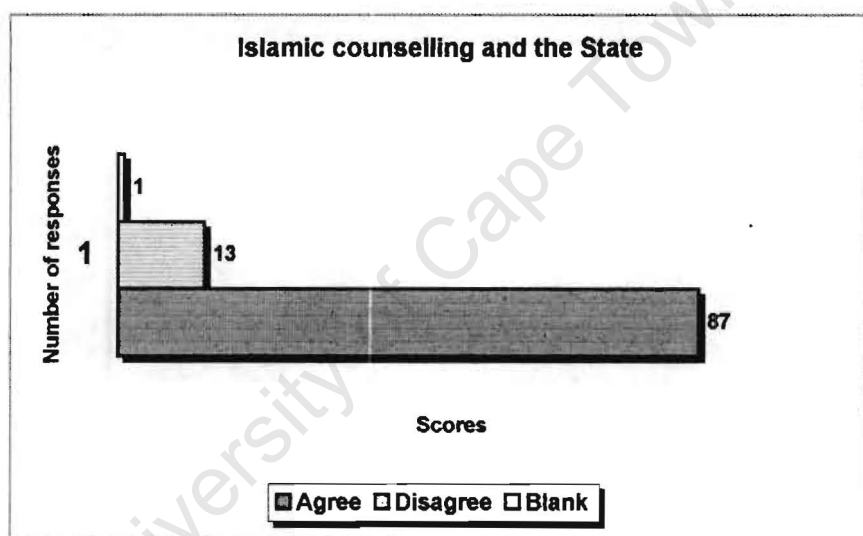
I sat in a session with a Imam...and when I listened to him counselling this particular person he violated so much of the counselling principles, he gave the person advice, he criticised the person, without even being aware...

The quality of counselling that takes place...whether we link up with the government or not we discussed that...but at the end of it what came out was there is a need for some sort of structure. Who will watch the counsellors do unethical things. People are a law unto themselves.

In this overall context, Imams as Islamic counsellors who is wholly accepted by the community by virtue of being an Imam, regardless of professional standards in services rendered to the community, cannot be considered correct. The comments of clients and

likewise practitioners, in fact, reflect a need for effective, accountable, and professional Islamic counselling service provision that is cognisant of the needs of clients. In the framework of this thesis, it highlights the community's needs for client-based services. Client attitudes on Islamic counselling and the state support this view.

The majority of clients agreed that Islamic counselling should be part of the government's social welfare system. The results were as follows:



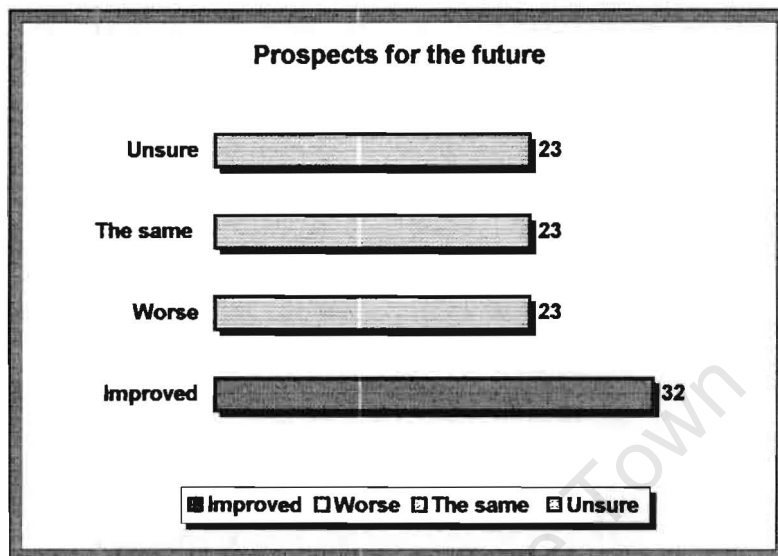
Eighty-seven clients agreed that Islamic counselling should be part of the state's Social Development Department. Thirteen disagreed and one 'no response' was recorded. In the follow-up question on how this relationship should be defined, forty-seven clients indicated that Islamic counselling should be separate from the state but must register with the Social Development Department. Thirty clients indicated that Islamic counselling

should be part of training programmes of the Social Development Department. Eight clients felt that the Social Welfare Department should provide all Islamic counselling services. Two clients marked the category 'other'. The outstanding fourteen responses is the client total that disagree that Islamic counselling should be part of state welfare services.

Clients commented on factors that could make it difficult for Islamic counselling to be part of a state service provision. The main response was that the government does not consider religion in general and Islam and Muslim people in particular. Clients described the state as anti-Muslim and as reluctant to accommodate the Muslim community. Stereotyping of Muslims, through associations with Islamic militancy related to participation in PAGAD, as a basis for exclusion and anti-Islamic sentiments including those by government were highlighted by clients as other concerns.

Many clients felt, though, that an integrated system would alleviate the problems clients experience in seeking Islamic counselling services. Here, financial difficulties and having to attend different agencies to deal with problems could be reduced through an integrated and more relevant area-based counselling service for Muslim clients.

In assessing the position of the Muslim community in post-Apartheid South Africa, the general sentiment was negative. Client opinions rated as:



While the highest score of thirty-two people indicated the position of Muslims had improved, cumulatively, clients felt that the position of Muslims had not improved. Indications were that circumstances were either the same as in the Apartheid era or else worse, with a joint score of forty-six responses.

In the last question, clients had to indicate their opinions about the importance of Islamic Counselling in different areas of life on a scale between 1 and 10. The categories listed were Individual Personal Development, Nation-building in South Africa, Family Life, and Muslim Community Building. Based on the number of 10 scores with which each category was marked, Muslim community building rated most important, followed by Family life, Individual Personal Development and Nation-building. Here, though, all categories were generally considered important and rated above average scores.

4.4 Assessment of Islamic counselling in South Africa

The finding of the client survey on Islamic counselling in South Africa illustrates that the Muslim community's needs for Islamic counselling is for a service that is accountable, professional and client-based. The service should ideally be independent but aligned to mainstream state service provision. The role of the Imam is recognised as important to Islamic counselling. However, the Imam does not necessarily have to be the main service provider of Islamic counselling. Where the Imam is the Islamic counsellor, the call is that he adheres to balanced, professional standards of counselling that is integrated into his role as an advisor on the *sharī'ah*.

The Muslim community's support for Islamic counselling as a wider accessible social service initiative is clear, and an indication of the community's willingness to integrate into mainstream society. The client survey expresses this relation as an autonomous community that simultaneously connects with the larger society in social transformation through service provision. In this respect, the process of state Islamic counselling and the participation of the Muslim community in nation-building through Islamic counselling service provision is a feasible alternative to current service provision.

Current Islamic service provision, of which the MJC provides the example in this study, reinforces the need for client-based state-supported Islamic counselling. At the MJC, the focus of Islamic counselling is the *sharī'ah* model. The approach transposes a judicial framework in the counselling process that de-emphasises the client's emotional and psychological wellbeing. The application of this framework is also based on a preferred

male-centred interpretation of religious text. This selective use of *sharī‘ah* counselling presents a number of concerns for social reconstruction and Islamic counselling service provision in the context of post-apartheid democratic society. Significant divergence is evident in this form of *sharī‘ah* counselling, in relation to the social and familial context to which it is applied in the Muslim community in South Africa.

South Africa's history of Apartheid and violence affected the population causing significant family and social disintegration. People were displaced by Group Areas legislation and subjected to dire social circumstances and limited resources in poor communities. This created communities where violence is endemic, with the fabric of society undermined. In the *sharī‘ah* counselling approach, restoration of the family is advised at an individual level against social circumstances that continually disempower clients. Hence, an ideal of the family is maintained while practical problems are overlooked which limits intervention.

The approach also affects the general wellbeing of Muslim clients and the community, in particular women, who are the main recipients of Islamic counselling. Women collectively bear the burden of communal, family and socio-economic disintegration. In engaging Islamic counselling, women are in a state of crisis or trauma when intervention is sought. The distressed state of clients is not adequately addressed in counselling, as counsellors concentrate on informing clients on injunctions of Islamic Law. A preferred interpretation of Islamic texts in the counselling process also minimises the experiences of women, as seen in the case of polygamy.

MJC *sharī‘ah* counselling also employ a long-term process, often in unfavourable circumstances that clients experience. Here counsellors follow a set format of intervention in an attempt to ensure joint counselling and reconcile couples in circumstances where male clients do not readily respond to counselling. Client problems may also be of such intensity that it has moved beyond reconciliation. Essentially, then *sharī‘ah* counselling as a primary counselling methodology conflict with the South African counselling context in a manner that inhibits effective counselling intervention.

As a private organisation, the position of the MJC Social Welfare department on the service it provides is one of goodwill to the community as it states:

The department has often made it clear that it renders to the public, the best service available free of cost, however the co-operation of the couples involved is often the key element in both reconciliation and divorce... If people refuse to co-operate or make the situation unnecessarily difficult, they have only themselves to blame.⁵⁶

The attitude of concern that at the same time blames the client reinforces oversight of both communal concerns and an in-depth understanding of the problems the Muslim community experience. It suggests that clients show gratitude for services offered, rather than the *‘ulamā’* take responsibility to ensure effective social intervention. The fact that the MJC provides a service to clients that is critical in determining the clients quality of

⁵⁶ See the department's web page: < http://www.mjc.org.za/social%20Welfare/social_main.htm > Accessed: 4 July 2002.

life requires primarily though that the organisation's intervention show high levels of efficiency, professional standards and client-based services.

Current Islamic counselling then disadvantage clients, especially women, in the process of seeking counselling intervention to effect change in their lives. In this respect, counselling which is a discipline that aims to effect positive change in the lives of clients has the opposite effect in the Muslim community in South Africa. Alternatives of community state welfare services that offer appropriate multicultural counselling is lacking, which in turn compels women to engage in processes which are limited to address their needs. The absence of community multicultural services, in addition, adds to financial difficulties of clients who have to travel great distances to seek such services. In this respect, the lack of client-based state-supported multicultural counselling services contradicts the state's constitutional commitment to nation-building, democracy and a better life for all South Africans.

4.5 Summary

This chapter explored the role of Islamic counselling and nation-building in South Africa based on the experiences of the Muslim community and client experiences of Islamic counselling. Experiences of counselling, perceptions of professional standards and the link between Islamic counselling and the state were central themes explored through fieldwork research of this thesis.

The majority of Muslim clients who seek counselling are women. Most are unemployed and economically dependent, and are from lower socio-economic levels of society. In addition to pressing socio-economic conditions, women are subjected to increased and sustained violence in the home. These circumstances collectively bear on women and the family, which the counselling process confirms, given that the majority of clients are women. In seeking Islamic counselling intervention, a lack of effective Islamic social services in the community, especially by religious leadership, reinforces these circumstances. The fact that the state does not provide appropriate multicultural social service provision reinforces these conditions and undermines the democratic ideals of post-Apartheid South Africa as enshrined in the Constitution.

CONCLUSION

Nineteen ninety-four was a defining point in the history of South Africa. Centuries of colonial and Apartheid oppression ended to give way to freedom for all South Africans. In pursuit of a new humanity for the country, nation-building was exalted to rebuild South Africa from a legacy of destruction to a culture of human rights. The Constitution embodied the values of nation-building while the Nation Question and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in South Africa underscored the importance of the process.

Reconciling diverse people; social, moral and human reconstruction; and socio-economic redress defined nation-building. The process exemplified the vision of equality, social justice, social reconstruction and human transformation desired for the country. It further identified the state as the central role-player in the process of nation-building in South Africa, based on its Constitutional commitment to transformation in the country.

Against this background, this thesis explored the role of multicultural counselling in general and Islamic counselling in particular, as part of nation-building in South Africa. The fundamental assertion of the study was that state-supported, client-based Islamic counselling service provision could facilitate nation-building. In a case study analysis of Islamic counselling service provision in the Muslim community in South Africa, the thesis illustrated the importance of Islamic counselling and highlighted the need for the state to provide such services as a constitutional responsibility.

The Muslim community, as a distinct religio-cultural community within the larger South African society, was subjected to Colonialism and Apartheid from their first arrival in South Africa. This affected their overall wellbeing leading to communal disintegration and pressing social conditions and problems, underpinned by a culture of violence that characterised South African society in general.

In the Muslim community, religious leaders who were the traditional Islamic social service providers overlooked the nature of these problems and its impact on the community. During the Apartheid period, a political focus of community interaction and leadership contests between '*ulamā*' and Muslim political organisations reinforced these circumstances. A tradition of imposing decisions onto the community rather than encouraging communal participation in decision-making sustained these conditions. The result was leadership styles of conservatism, negative communication and interaction, political rivalry, and the oversight of communal concerns (especially as relates the position of women in society), that in many ways reflected the Apartheid value system.

In the above context, many social and communal problems in the Muslim community were not adequately addressed. These problems remained therefore a feature of Muslim communal life, and in modern-day South Africa, are apparent in Islamic counselling encounters. Post-Apartheid South Africa provides new opportunities to deal with these problems and affect positive social transformation in the Muslim community. In addition,

it provides the opportunity to reconstruct and integrate the Muslim community in South African society within the broader process of nation-building in South Africa.

The ability to effect such change, however, is inhibited by the fact that religious leaders continue to provide Islamic counselling services in a manner that reflects the past. Islamic counselling is not client-based, lacks professional counselling standards and is inconsistent with the new democratic milieu in South Africa. As such, current Islamic counselling service is limited to effect societal transformation which is consistent with nation-building in South Africa. In contrast, as this study has observed, effective Islamic counselling in South Africa in respect of the latter is possible if a state-aligned service.

In exploring a role for Islamic counselling in post-apartheid South Africa, which is consistent with nation-building, this thesis illustrates that multicultural counselling with Islamic counselling as a component hereof needs be a state initiative to effect desired change. The service should ideally be integrated in mainstream welfare service provision that allows for efficient and accessible services in various communities.

The provision of state multicultural counselling offers a channel for reconciliation, healing, social and gender justice, and socio-economic redress in South Africa. Here services that rests on diversity are located at the interface of clients, practitioner and community relations and become a locus of diverse interaction that compels all participants to become aware of individual and community diversity. This process of intervention that assists to reconstruct the lives of clients, based on cognisance and

respect of client's religio-cultural values, and appropriate service provision enhances interaction that encourages reconciliation.

In addition, state multicultural service provision would provide resources to those who are most disadvantaged in society and as such facilitate social justice and socio-economic redress in South African society. Here it would offer services at a communal level, and thus allow for easy access to professional, client-based and cost-effective services. Formal networking across sectors, in particular with the range of community religio-cultural counselling service providers, including Islamic counsellors can further facilitate the process. In respect of Islamic counselling, it affords an opportunity to '*ulamā*' as Islamic counselling service providers to constructively interact in society by offering a supportive service to state service provision.

One of the most important advantages of client-based state-supported multicultural counselling service provision would be the ability to transform the role of religion and culture in society. Although the positive influence of religion in society is often acclaimed, it is rarely observed. Perceptions of religion in society remain that of catalyst for conflict and division. Multicultural counselling as a state service stands to reverse this trend by renewing the role of religion in society to embrace the human condition and enhance a sense of common humanity.

This thesis makes the theoretical knowledge base available to begin this process. Multicultural service provision is consonant with the state's constitutional obligation to

facilitate nation-building in South Africa. In the Muslim community, the means to this end is relevant client-based, state-supported Islamic counselling service provision. As such, the following recommendations are presented in the context of Islamic counselling and nation-building in South Africa.

- Multicultural counselling service provision should be integrated into all mainstream state welfare services as part of democratic service provision in South Africa. This study highlights the importance of Islamic counselling. Other similar forms of counselling should be explored and likewise integrated into state services to enhance nation-building in South Africa.
- Community training courses in multicultural counselling for community counsellors and practitioners including Islamic counsellors should be included in state services to ensure effective, accountable social intervention.
- Community Islamic counsellors, in turn, should be suitably qualified and skilled in counselling to offer counselling services. To this end a professional code of conduct and practice that include minimum standards for practice should be devised for Islamic counsellors
- State services should explore and integrate counselling initiatives that link communal Islamic counselling with the professional expertise of state practitioners to encourage effective multicultural social intervention.

السلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته

As Salaamu 'alaykum!
Peace be unto you!

QUESTIONNAIRE

ON

ISLAMIC COUNSELLING



*A Student Research Project at the University of Cape Town
2001*

22 July 2001

Dear Sir / Madam

Asalaamu Alaykum

My name is Somaya Abdullah. I am a student at the University of Cape Town and am doing a research degree on the role of Islamic counselling in nation-building in South Africa. The aim of this research is to see if Islamic Counselling can be part of welfare development in South Africa and how this can be achieved.

To get an idea of what Muslims people would think about this issue, we are handing out the attached questionnaire to different people to hear their views and opinions on this process. This information will be very valuable in helping to understand how the Muslim community feel about Islamic Counselling and its role in society, and could also help to improve counselling services that are available to Muslim people.

I hereby wish to request your assistance in this process by completing the enclosed questionnaire and once completed, posting it in the self-addressed envelope provided. Postage is paid so all you need to do is to place your completed questionnaire in the envelope and then drop it off at your nearest post office or post box for delivery. **Please note that this is an anonymous questionnaire and all information is strictly confidential.** The closing date for this research is **31 JULY 2001** and it would be appreciated if you could return your completed questionnaire before this date. During this time, should you wish to check any of the information in the questionnaire I can be contacted at 6964921 and will gladly assist.

Shukran and your participation in this project is much appreciated.

Somaya Abdullah.

PLEASE COMPLETE THIS QUESTIONNAIRE BY MARKING YOUR ANSWERS (✓) IN THE CORRECT SPACES BELOW. NOTE THAT EXCEPT FOR THE LAST QUESTION, YOU MUST TICK (✓) YOUR ANSWERS RIGHT THROUGH TO THE END. YOU WILL NOTICE THAT THE ANSWER SPACES ARE ALSO NUMBERED. THIS YOU CAN IGNORE AS IT HAS TO DO WITH RECORDING ALL INFORMATION ACCURATELY AND IS NOT DIRECTLY LINKED TO YOUR ANSWERS

SECTION 1

BASIC PERSONAL DETAILS: PLEASE TICK (✓) ONE ANSWER FOR EACH QUESTION BELOW.

What is your gender?

Male	1
Female	2

What is your age group?

Under 18	1
18- 30	2
31-50	3
Over 50	4

What is your marital status?

Single	1
Married	2
Separated	3
Divorced	4
Widowed	5

What is your highest level of education achieved?

Primary School	1
Secondary or High School	2
College / Technicon	3
University Degree or Diploma	4
No formal education	5

What is your present work status?

Self-employed	1
Employed	2
Unemployed	3
Housewife	4
Pensioner	5
Student / Scholar	6
Other	7

What is your estimated total monthly household income after tax deductions?

Less than R500	1
Between R500-R1000	2
BetweenR1000-R2000	3
BetweenR2000-R4000	4
More than R4000	5

How often do you take part in Islamic duties and activities, example: Salaah, Mosque prayers, Islamic community classes?

Often	1
Regularly	2
Seldom	3
Never	4

Please indicate which area you live in.

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SECTION 2

A: ISLAMIC COUNSELLING IN THE MUSLIM COMMUNITY

1. Have you ever used an Islamic Counselling service? **Please tick (✓) one answer.**

YES	1
NO	0

2. Has anyone in your family or circle of friends ever used an Islamic Counselling service? **Please tick (✓) one answer.**

YES	1
NO	0

3. What do you think of current Islamic Counselling services that are available to the Muslim Community? You may base your answer on experience or what you have read or heard about such services. **Please tick (✓) one answer.**

Excellent	1
Very good	2
Good	3
Fair	4
Poor	5
Very poor	6

4. If you have been to an Islamic Counselling service for assistance how did you find the assistance offered to you? **Please tick (✓) one answer.**

Very helpful	1
Helpful	2
Fairly helpful	3
Unhelpful	4
Very unhelpful	5
Does not apply to me.	6

5. If you were to need counselling again, where would you prefer to look for help? **Please tick (✓) one answer.**

I would go to the same service as before.	1
I would go to a different Islamic Counselling service.	2
I would go to an ordinary counselling service	3
Does not apply to me.	4

B: PRACTICE AND QUALIFICATIONS FOR ISLAMIC COUNSELLING

NOTE: For the next three Questions, 6, 7, and 8, you must tick (✓) **FIVE** choices please.

6. The following is a list of organisations in Cape Town and people who offer various services including counselling from an Islamic point of view. Suppose you were to seek counselling and had to choose from this list, where would you prefer to go for such assistance? **Please select five choices and tick (✓) your five choices in the list below.**

The Muslim Assembly (MA)	1
The Muslim Judicial Council (MJC)	2
Islamic Unity Convention (IUC)	3
The Islamic Social and Welfare Association (ISWA)	4
South African National Zakah Fund (SANZAF)	5
Islamic Dawah Movement (IDM)	6
A Sheikh or Imam	7
A Hakim or Muslim Healer (Also known as a "geleerde man / vrou")	8
An Islamic Telephonic Helpline Service	9
Muslim Radio Counselling	10

Where do you think would be the best places to practice Islamic Counselling from? **Please select five choices and tick (✓) these five choices in the list below.**

Community centres	1
Mosques	2
Private consulting rooms	3
Islamic organisations	4
Government welfare offices	5
At a clients home	6
Hospitals / Clinics	7
In the workplace	8

8. Please select from the list below the **five most important** qualities you feel an Islamic counsellor should display when working with clients. **Please tick (✓) your five choices in the list below.**

Good listening skills	1
Strong religious morals	2
Respect for confidentiality of information	3
Social Awareness (Knowledge of society and community involvement)	4
Genuiness	5
Being Non-judgmental	6
Constant awareness of Allah	7
Compassion	8
Understanding and consideration for a clients feelings	9
Acceptance	10
Being Trustworthy	11
Professionalism	12
The ability to advise and direct clients in problem solving	13
Humility	14

**Thank you. There are now no more questions where you have to tick five choices.
Please continue and tick (✓) ONE answer only for the next questions.**

9. What do you think is the **MAIN** educational requirement that a person should have to qualify as an Islamic Counsellor? **Please tick (✓) one answer.**

Studies in Islam.	1
Studies in Counselling.	2
Studies in Islam and Counselling	3
Studies in Traditional Medicine of the Prophet (PBUH)	4
No formal qualifications are necessary.	5

10. What is your view of Islamic counsellors working with clients of the opposite sex? **Please tick (✓) one answer.**

Islamic Counselling should be between clients and counsellors of the same sex.	1
Islamic counsellors should only work with clients of the opposite sex in the presence of others.	2
Only men should do Islamic Counselling.	3
Only women should do Islamic Counselling.	4
Gender does not make a difference.	5

C: ISLAMIC COUNSELLING AND GOVERNMENT IN SOUTH AFRICA

11. Do you think Islamic Counselling should be a government or an independent service? **Please tick (✓) one answer.**

A government service.	1
An independent service.	2

12. Do you think Islamic Counselling should be part of the government's Social Development Department? (In the past this department was called the Department of Welfare). **Please tick (✓) one answer.**

YES	1
NO	0

13. If your answer to question 12 is **YES**, what do you think would be the best work agreement with this department? **Please tick (✓) one answer.**

The Social Development Department must provide <u>all</u> Islamic Counselling services.	1
Islamic Counselling services should work separately but must register with the Social Development Department.	2
Islamic Counselling must be part of training programs run by the department	3

14. Which **one** of the options below do you think would be the best one to help improve Islamic Counselling services to clients? **Please tick (✓) one answer.**

The government must supervise Islamic Counselling services.	1
A professional group of people must supervise Islamic Counselling services.	2
A community organisation must supervise Islamic Counselling services.	3
Islamic counsellors must get training to develop their skills	4
Islamic Counselling services must work without outside involvement.	5

15. Please read the points below and show if you agree or disagree that these are issues that could make it difficult for Islamic Counselling to be part of government social services? **Please tick (✓) one answer for each point below.**

	AGREE ↓	DISAGREE ↓	UNSURE ↓
Government services do not include religion.	1	2	3
Government services are not supportive of Muslims	1	2	3
Government services are not familiar with Islamic values	1	2	3
Counsellors in government services are not always Muslim.	1	2	3
Counsellors in government services are not qualified to work with Muslims.	1	2	3

16. What do you think is the situation of the Muslim community in South Africa today? **Please tick (✓) one answer.**

There have been positive changes for Muslim people since the 1994 elections.	1
Muslim people still need to become part of the New South Africa.	2
Muslim people are still in the same position as before the 1994 elections	3

17. How important do you think Islamic Counselling could be in the following areas of life? Please note that for this last question you must **SCORE NOT TICK** your answer. **Please score your answer as 1,2,3 and 4 with 1 as the most important to 4 as the least important of your choices.**

Individual Personal Development	
Nation Building in South Africa	
Family Life	
Muslim Community Building	

18. Please tell us in your own words what you think Islamic Counselling should include or anything else that you would like to share on this topic. (You may use the back of this page to continue with your comments.)

Thank you for your contribution. Your time and effort is appreciated. Kindly return your completed questionnaire in the self-addressed stamped envelope, which is enclosed.

APPENDIX TWO

CLIENT SURVEY-MUSLIM JUDICIAL COUNCIL

SECTION 1

What is your gender?

Male	1
Female	2

What is your age group?

Under 18	1
18-30	2
31-50	3
Over 50	4

What is your marital status?

Single	1
Married	2
Separated	3
Divorced	4
Widowed	5

What is your highest level of education achieved?

Primary School	1
Secondary or High School	2
College / Technicon	3
University Degree or Diploma	4
No formal education	5

What is your monthly income after tax?

Less than R500	1
Between R500-R1000	2
BetweenR1000-R2000	3
BetweenR2000-R4000	4
More than R4000	5

Which area do you live in.?

SECTION 2

1. Is this the first time you're using an Islamic counselling service?

YES	1
NO	2

2. How did you find the assistance offered to you?

Very helpful	1
Helpful	2
Not very helpful	3
Unhelpful	4

3. If you were to need counselling again where would you go to for help?

This same service	1
A different Islamic Counselling service	2
An ordinary counselling service	3
Other	4

4. Which one of the following services is your first choice for Islamic Counselling?

An Islamic Organisation	1
A Sheigh / Imam	2
Telephone or Radio - Anonymous	3
Ordinary counselling	4
Hakim or Muslim Healer	5
Other	6

5. Which gender do you prefer a counsellor to be?

Male	
Female	
Does not make a difference.	

6. What qualifications do you think a person should have to qualify as an Islamic Counsellor?

Studies in Islam.	1
Studies in Counselling.	2
Studies in Islam and Counselling	3
Studies in Traditional Medicine of the Prophet	4
Doesn't make a difference	5

7. Where do you think Islamic Counselling could be practiced from?

8. What qualities should an Islamic Counsellor show when working with clients?

9. Would you agree or disagree that Islamic Counselling should be part of the government's Social Welfare Department.

AGREE	
DISAGREE	0

10. If you agree, how do you think this should be put into practice?

All Islamic Counselling must be provided by the government's SWD.	1
Islamic Counselling should be separate but must register with the SWD.	2
Islamic Counselling must be part of training programs of the SWD	3
Other	4

11. What could make it difficult for Islamic Counselling to be part of the government?

12. Which would be the best way to improve Islamic Counselling services to clients?

Government Supervision	1
Community Supervision	2
Training Counsellors	3
Other	4

13. How do you feel about the position of the Muslim community in South Africa today?

Improved.	
Worse	2
The same	3
Unsure	4

14. Do you think Islamic Counselling is important in the following areas of life? Score each answer between 1-10)

Yourself	
Nation Building in South Africa	
Family Life	
Muslim Community Building	

15. Do you have any other comments?

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